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CHRIST's Loveliness and Glory, in his Personal and Relative Characters, and gracious Offers to Sinners:

Consider'd in

Twelve SERMONS,

Preach'd at

Mr. *COWARD*'s LECTURE.

By several MINISTERS.

LONDON:

Printed for RICHARD HETT, *at the* Bible *and* Crown *in the* Poultry, *near* Cheapside.
MDCCXXIX.

TO

William Coward *Esq*;

SIR,

THE following Sermons being some of the fruits of a weekly Lecture, founded and maintained by your sole generosity, do now appear in the world at your desire, which first brought them into the pulpit; that your main view of having Christ directly and immediately preached (signified by the late excellent Mr. Matthew Clarke, *at the first opening of it now upward of three years) being thus publickly specified, might be more effectually kept up, and pursued by those that shall at any time have the honour of bearing a part in this service.*

It cannot certainly be thought by any, that you take on you the dictator, and unwarrantably prescribe what is to be preached, when you recommend to your Lecturers the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel, that are conversant about our blessed Saviour, for their professed and principal subject. For these are no other

doctrines, than what one would expect from their excellency, dignity, ſweetneſs and importance, that every goſpel-miniſter of choice will be led, as he is by his commiſſion obliged, moſt to preach and inculcate; determining with the great apoſtle of the Gentiles (a pattern that none ſure need be aſham'd or afraid to copy after) to know nothing ſave Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified. *Nor can there be any danger of too great confinement and reſtraint from this method of exerciſing the miniſterial office; ſince the knowledge of Chriſt is as a central point to all other divine and religious truths, which are either drawn out of, or drawn into it; ſo that relatively to this,* the whole counſel of God *may well, and indeed ought to be* declared, *that it may have its due and proper effect in producing true religion in the hearts and lives of men. For I cannot but think, that practical holineſs, and real piety, are always found to grow up beſt under the influence of evangelical principles; and that thoſe have been, and ever will be the ſeaſons of the moſt numerous converſions, of filling and building up the church of God,* of the arm of the Lord being revealed, *and of the moſt illuſtrious manifeſtations of a divine preſence along with the Word, when the name of Chriſt dwells on the lips of preachers, whereby himſelf comes to* dwell in the hearts *of hearers* by faith *and love.*

You, Sir, have been witneſs in the earlier age of your life, to a very happy and eminent

ſucceſs

ſucceſs of ſo managing the goſpel-miniſtry, as to make our bleſſed Lord the reigning theme in it; whom our forefathers choſe to preach with ſincere and affectionate zeal, rather than with artful and eloquent addreſs, ſeeking to recommend their ſubject more than themſelves, and to bring Chriſt into the ſouls of men, rather than preſent him to the fancy. And it is the remembrance you have hereof, that excites now in you this laudable endeavour of contributing toward the revival and continuance of the ſame conduct, and with it, if it may pleaſe God, of the ſame ſucceſs, both in the preſent, and in future generations.

I perſuade my ſelf, that it is no more agreeable to your inclination to receive, than it is either to my temper or conſcience to give flattering titles. There is another, who muſt bear the glory, even he who builds the houſe. *Our only part is to be content that he ſhould have it all, and to ſecure it to him in as full and extenſive a manner as poſſible; which ſincerely to endeavour, is praiſe enough to any of us, and without it nothing is acceptable, or praiſe worthy: And may all, both miniſters and Chriſtians then, conſpire to ſet and keep the crown on his head! 'Tis to his honour, your Lecture, with the preſent and all the after fruits of it is devoted; and may it ever be of uſe to ſpread abroad, not only the name, but together with it, the ſweet ſavour of the ſaving knowledge*

knowledge of Christ! And should it, with your other designs akin to it, incidentally declare, that it was Mr. Coward's *highest ambition to approve himself a friend of Christ and his ministers, and an instrument of exalting his name, and propagating his gospel; this is no more than what every true Christian avows as the governing aim of his life, tho' few may have equal ability or inclination to pursue it as you have done.*

With respect to the Sermons which are now humbly presented to you; though for want of concerting the scheme of managing the several parts beforehand, a regular connection of the subjects could hardly be expected; yet, I hope, this advantage which was wanting to the contrivance, will scarce appear to be lacking in the execution, as the several things here discoursed on in the method wherein they are now disposed, lie in a tolerable good order, and series of dependence on each other.

The two first sermons you were pleased to allot to me, as introductory to the rest, treat of love to Christ, and the distinct grounds of his amiableness; some of which are more fully and particularly handled in those that follow. I am sensible, the length into which these Sermons are run, needs an apology to your self, my brethren, and the reader; but that I may not repeat the offence, by attempting to excuse it, I only desire the privilege

of

of their being considered as four, for which end I have made pauses about the middle of each.

In the next discourses, Christ the Son of God, in a general view of his Divine Person and offices, is represented as the grand subject of a gospel ministry.

Our Lord is then consider'd in the wonderful constitution of his Person, and in his Glory, as the incarnate Son of God dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.

His general office and work of the Mediator between God and man, the great end of his incarnation, which is the subject next treated of, naturally leads us to what follows;

His particular office of an atoning interceding Priest, our righteous Advocate, and the Propitiation for our sins.

And lastly, our blessed Lord, in the fulness of his saving character, offers himself to supply the wants, and satisfy the desires of all who will accept of him, in this inviting engaging address to the children of men, If any man is athirst, let him come unto me and drink.

I have nothing farther to add, but my hearty prayers to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would multiply his blessings of every kind on your self and valuable consort; that he would satisfy you both, *as he has in part already,* with a long *and useful* life *here, and* shew you his salvation

vation *hereafter*; *and that he would peculiarly* bleſs the ſeed which is *and ſhall be* miniſtred by you *for the gaining and confirming many admirers to Chriſt*; *that by this means, in ſome meaſure,* his name may be made to be remembred through all generations, and the people may praiſe him for ever and ever; *and herein I am perſuaded all my brethren in the preſent ſervice, join with,*

Stepney May 28, 1729.

SIR,

Your moſt humble

and obliged ſervant,

JOHN HUBBARD.

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LOVE
TO AN
Unseen Saviour.

1 PET. i. 8.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

IF any consideration may be allow'd to be added to the inherent excellency and lively force of these words themselves, for the better gaining your attention to them; perhaps it may be of some use to let you know, that they are now insisted on, at the special desire of the worthy founder of this Lecture, with a design of leading the way to a set of discourses, directly intended to recommend our Lord Jesus Christ, which lying near his heart, was principally in his view from the first

SERM. I. preach'd *Sept.* 27. 1728.

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settlement of it; and that they have also often made a strong and delightful impression on my own mind: To which let me add, that our text having frequently been made the foundation of discourses on the subject of love to Christ, with the other Christian graces mentioned in it, seems generally to have been thought very happily framed to express and recommend them with advantage, and admirably adapted to Christian experience and edification.

May then that amiable Saviour, whom I am from hence to propose as the best object of our affections, so by his Spirit inspire my heart and lips, touch'd with a coal from the altar of heavenly love, in the management of this divine theme; that, notwithstanding its having been so often discoursed of, (and, surely nothing deserves it more, or will bear it better) it may now be display'd a-new in such a pleasing and striking light before our eyes, as to kindle in all our breasts pure and warmer flames than ever, of a sincere, devout and affectionate love to our great and dear Redeemer!

As the words of the text are themselves full of energy and marvellous strength, being delivered in a strain of perfect rapture; so they stand in a context of a piece with themselves. For this whole passage, from the first to the end of the twelfth verse, contains

contains such noble sentiments drawn from some of the chief principles of the Christian religion, connected together in so just and happy an order, and cloath'd in such sublime and nervous expressions; that one cannot easily conceive of any thing to exceed it, either for the variety and excellency of the matter, or for the admirable manner of the composition.

After the inscription and salutation in the two first verses; the apostle opens the body of his epistle with a solemn doxology presented to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the interest these Christians had in the salvation of the gospel: In order to affect them the more with which, he represents it to them in various agreeable lights: First, in it self, as comprizing many excellent blessings conferred by God upon them, through Christ, which he briefly sums up under the first and the last, their regeneration, and their final inheritance, elegantly described as being incorruptible, undefiled, and never fading away, and these declared to be inseparably connected by the sure and firm band of Perseverance, holding, as with a double guard, the inheritance and the heirs together: In the next place, in relation to their present temper of mind produced by this salvation; and to their present circumstances, which, though afflictive and grievous

v. 3, 4, 5.

ous enough, were yet so over-ruled by divine wisdom and love, as neither to impair
ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. their salvation, nor their Christian spirit; both of which, as in close conjunction, they rather serv'd to promote and improve: He then further represents this salvation they had now enter'd upon by the gospel, as the great and principal subject of the study, enquiries, and prophecies of all the
ver. 10, 11, 12. prophets under the Old Testament: And finally, (than which nothing could well serve more effectually to raise to a proper pitch their esteem, value, gratitude and joy for it) as commanding the attention and eager searches of the angels themselves:
ver. 12. *Which things*, says he, *the angels desire to look into.* The Christian salvation is a theme worthy of an angel's regard. These bright and spotless spirits, who excel in wisdom and strength, find nothing in their native heavens to draw and fix their attention and wonder so much, as the transaction here upon earth, of bringing many sons to glory, by making the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. And what then can be a greater recommendation of the gospel salvation to the constant contemplation, and all the pleasing affections of the children of men, especially all sincere Christians, who are the persons immediately interested therein?

Our

Our text ſtands in the ſecond part of this noble paragraph, and particularly exhibits in the example of theſe Chriſtians, thoſe Chriſtian graces, which have Chriſt himſelf for their immediate object and end.

The apoſtle's addreſs here, as alſo in *verſe* vi. in commending, rather than directing their temper, was the moſt moving and pathetic way of teaching them what they ought, and ſhould labour ſtill more and more to attain. It is eaſy to obſerve in the words a very beautiful antitheſis, between *not ſeeing*, and yet *loving: not ſeeing*, and yet *believing and rejoicing in Chriſt:* ſerving wonderfully to recommend their reſpects toward him, which could be ſo ſtrong and lively, notwithſtanding the diſadvantage of abſence, and want of perſonal acquaintance, as to be little or nothing affected by this diſcouraging circumſtance, that naturally tends, and ſeldom fails in other caſes, to weaken affection; but to be in a manner the ſame as they might have been expected, in caſe they had enjoy'd never ſo long an immediate converſe with Chriſt. We may further here obſerve the happy order of diſpoſing theſe graces of love, faith and joy in Chriſt, ſo as to repreſent them all together in one eaſy compendious view, and in their mutual dependence, by placing faith in the middle, as fundamental to both the others,

and the band of connection between them,
7 ſo moſt fitly choſen to make the tranſition from the one to the other; ſince love to Chriſt, beginning from faith in him, goes on ſtill by the help of faith, and only in proportion to its ſtrength and vigorous exerciſe, till it advance and terminate in a triumphant exulting joy. Nor ought the peculiar emphaſis and ſignificant uſe, couch'd under the repetition of the circumſtance of not ſeeing Chriſt, in the ſecond clauſe, to be overlook'd. For beſides the remarkable grace and force there is in it, as equally recommending the Chriſtian's faith and joy with his love, and more eſpecially his joy, which it ſets off with a kind of ſurprize, it being of the nature of joy to have its object preſent: There is yet a farther diſtinct meaning and cauſe for it, and that is, to imply and fix faith as the ground and reaſon of this ſeeming paradox, how Chriſt, though never ſeen, can yet be truly loved; and that ſo, as to become the object of tranſporting joy; ſo that the ſenſe and proper force of the repetition, and this ſecond clauſe, into which it is carried, ſeems clearly to be this, a little more fully expreſs'd: "In whom though now ye ſee "him not, yet believing, which ſerves to "you all the purpoſes of ſight, and is a "ſpiritual ſight it ſelf, whereby he is ſet "before the eye of your mind, and con-

"verſed

" verſed with as really as if he were per-
" ſonally preſent among you; ye not only
" love him, but love him ſo, as even now
" to rejoice in him, and that with joy un-
" ſpeakable and full of glory."

The words of the text lay open the very heart of every real Chriſtian, as affected and diſpoſed toward the perſon whoſe name he bears, in three main ingredients of a right Chriſtian temper, which ſummarily comprehend the whole of it: Faith in Chriſt, which is the root that produces and bears the reſt; and love with joy in him, which are the bloſſoms and fruits that grow out of faith.

It is manifeſt, there is nothing here aſſign'd, ſo peculiar to theſe Chriſtians, which may not equally belong to all others. For being deſcribed as having never ſeen Chriſt in the fleſh; this makes their caſe, however nearer they lived to the times of his firſt coming, in reſpect of any advantage for manifeſting becoming affections to him, exactly parallel with ours, who live ſo many hundred years ſince. What therefore the apoſtle here declares to be their real temper, with regard to Chriſt; the ſame for ſubſtance muſt belong to all, in every age, who are Chriſtians, not in name only, but in deed and in truth; though there may be a great difference in its degrees, and few, in theſe later ages eſpecially, come

up to the strength and fervour which animated the faith, love and joy that the primitive Christians expres'd to their great Lord and Master.

In discoursing on the words, because I can't propose to speak distinctly and fully to all the three Christian principles they recommend; I shall therefore confine my self to love to Christ, and only so far consider the other two, as they either flow into, or out of this.

This proposition then collecting into one view the whole sense of the text, and my design from it, may be laid down for the foundation of the ensuing discourse:

Doct. That, *Love to Christ, though unseen, springing from faith in him, which supplies the place of sight, and tending to a joy in him, which advanced to a due pitch, will become unspeakable and full of glory; is an essential necessary part of a right Christian temper.*

The truth of this proposition, as obviously arising from the frame of the Christians described in the text, to which ours ought undoubtedly to answer, just as our circumstances do to theirs, need not be distinctly and particularly made out. It is too evident to require any formal proof, that all who name the name of *Jesus* ought to love him; and that all real Christians do indeed so. This, on the one hand, is often

ten expresly commanded, commended, and by the most glorious promises and expectations encouraged: And the want of it, on the other hand, is charged as highly criminal, and threatned in the severest manner. Hence this is frequently laid down as the undoubted genuine character of all true Christians; and indeed, the necessity and importance of it appears sufficiently from the whole model and frame of the Christian religion; the design and end whereof can never be answer'd, its motives never have their due force and effect, nor any of the duties it recommends, be truly perform'd, without a sincere and hearty love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This then being apparently certain, that it belongs to the true spirit of Christianity, and is of absolute necessity and importance for forming the character, performing the duty, and enjoying the privileges of real Christians, that Christ be unfeignedly and cordially loved; all that is requisite for the due explaining and improving this subject, will fall under these following heads.

I. To give some general account of the nature of love to Christ.

II. To consider the object, the Lord Jesus Christ, with the particular grounds and reasons in himself of loving him.

III. To

III. To open the particular acts and expressions of a genuine love to Christ.

IV. To assign the properties and discriminating characters of this love.

V. To shew the influence of faith into the love of Christ, as accounting for it, though the object be unseen, and withal, how this circumstance proves a commendation of love.

Lastly, Apply the whole.

I begin with the

First, Which is to give some account of the general nature of love to Christ. As to which, it is to be observ'd, that here it answers to the fullest and most adequate idea of this affection, when applied to rational beings, as to them the passion of love seems best to be confined; and it may be thus in a general manner described. Love to Christ imports an high esteem of him, as the most excellent object in himself, and the most suitable good to us; together with a benevolential propensity toward him; both expres's'd in desire and delight suitable to each, that is, respecting ourselves and our own enjoyment of him, and happiness by him, whether yet to be obtained,

ed, or already had; and respecting himself, and his own blessedness and interest, or what he accounts his interest, whether yet to be attained, or already secured. There are four essential acts that go into and form the perfect notion of love; and they all obtain here.

First, There is esteem, which is as the ground-work of love; whence it is denominated love of esteem. And on all accounts Christ deserves this in the highest degree, as well in relation to us, and for God's sake, as for himself.

Again, there is in love along with esteem, according to its perfect idea, the habit, temper, or inclination of benevolence, or good-will to the party beloved. This is called love of benevolence, and it may be called esteem too; a benevolential esteem, as the former is complacential. The former considers its object as fit to do us good, or give us pleasure, immediately or mediately: The latter regards its object as fit or worthy to have and receive good, whether absolutely, or from us, or others. It need not be enquir'd whether of them most properly deserves the name of love, for both are necessary ingredients into it, where the object answers, or may answer, both the characters; and thus our love to Christ takes in one as well as the other: For though, properly speaking, he is indeed

deed above receiving any good from us; yet he has given scope for our exercising a real benevolence to him, in regard both to his own merit of all good, and to that interest he has on foot in the world, which he reckons peculiarly his own. And he justly expects our love towards him should form it self into a temper of benevolence, as well as of complacency.

It need not any more be enquired, whether our love to a person, and so to God or Christ, is in regard to their fitness to please and do us good, exercised toward them for our own sake, and in regard to their worth or fitness to receive good, exercised toward them for themselves; for, strictly speaking, these views don't lie so much asunder as they may seem to do. For, whether the expressions be exactly proper or no, yet in both cases alike, the object of our love, and in which it rests, is without us, another, and not ourselves; and the affection is within us, and is accompanied with pleasure which is our own. For in the latter case, the good of another whom I love, is by vertue of the affection which is of an uniting nature made my own good, a common good, and capable to produce pleasure as really my own as any private good.

Esteem and benevolence then are the two first and leading branches of love; and both find room enough in Christ. The

The two remaining, desire, fitly enough called love in motion, and delight or complacency, called love at rest, rank themselves under each of the former respectively; for 'tis of the nature of true love to desire and delight in the happiness of the object, as really as its own proceeding from it. And these two suit themselves just to the different states of the subject or object; sometimes one, at another time the other being more proper to it; though they may also stand together, as they do, or may, in the Christian's present love to Christ, where full scope is given to both, as will appear more hereafter. But so much may suffice for shewing the general nature of love to Christ; which will be better understood from the following heads, whereof the next, to which we now proceed, is,

II. To consider the object itself of the Christian's love: the Lord Jesus Christ, with the grounds that are found with him, of our loving him. Now such is the fulness and diffusive copiousness of the reasons inducing love to Christ; and these are so intermixt, and run into one another, that as on the whole, love, in its utmost extent, will be found most justly due to him; so single grounds of love to him may often well support many acts together, and not

only those distinct ones which most eminently suit them respectively.

Various then are the grounds of Christ's amiableness, and all of them very strong and engaging: For what is there in him that is not amiable? What, that don't deserve and bespeak our highest and best affections for him? Him, *who is altogether lovely*; in whom is to be found all that is great and good, pleasant and delectable, without any thing terrible or disagreeable, any thing that may not put on a lovely form, and appear in an amiable dress; for so does even his wrath and vengeance, being no other than the just result of his abused patience, his iron rod, being only the sceptre of his grace inverted, where refused; and his face of a lion put on, that of a lamb first shew'd in vain. Him, in whom are combined and centred in the utmost perfection all the causes of love, which are dispersed and found but in a scanty measure and low degree among other objects; him in whom majesty and mildness, power and grace, fulness and sweetness, wisdom and condescention, antiquity and novelty, beauty and love are blended together in the most perfect harmony. Him, who is the proper food for this appetite of love, both to invite and fill it in all its inclinations and tendencies, being capable of producing immediately or mediately pleasures

Sol. song, v. 16.

sures of every kind adapted to all our senses external or internal, natural or spiritual; wherewith fully and adequately to gratify and content them: In a word, him, in whom all worthy, noble, refined, grateful, familiar and friendly love may find a place together; for its distinct and united exercises, without any confusion to distract it, without any impure alloy to defile it, without any thing mean to debase it, without any disappointments to cross it, without any unkindness to ruffle it, without any needless delays to perplex it, without any terrifying aspects to discourage it, without any ceremonious forms to embarrass it; without any capricious burthensom services to tire it out, without any partner-griefs to distress it, or indeed any cloggs, difficulties, and troubles whatsoever to molest and afflict it on the side of the object, to whom our love has the freest access, and from whom it is ennobled and perfected by the reflection of the lustre and glory of the amiable object on the affection which embraces it.

Our blessed Lord is truly every way so deserving of our tendereſt, warmest and strongest love, for all manner of attractive charms that meet in him; that nothing in a manner should be loved but himself; nothing, it is certain, in the whole circle of created objects before him, nothing like

him,

him, nothing without him, but all of them ſhould be loved for his ſake, and uſed as ſcales and ſteps to mount up our love higher and higher to him, where only it can attain its proper compleat reſt. Nay, I may venture to ſay, that the infinitely bleſſed and amiable God himſelf, abſtractly conſider'd, and in the perſon of the Father, apart from his incarnate Son, is not ſo immediate and direct an object of our love in its full exerciſe, in all its familiar endearing expreſſions, as well as venerating adoring acts, as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; nor could he be truly loved by us at all, conſidering how our lapſed ſtate takes away from us all comfortable concerns with the goodneſs of our great Creator, which is the only proper and primary ground of all love, overwhelms his amiable, by his dreadful attributes, and cloaths his whole nature, with all its manifeſtations and operations relative to us, in awful terror, unleſs it had been for Chriſt, who has reſtored and enlarged for us the proſpects of divine goodneſs, and in whom, conſequently, God, as only ſeen to our comfort, comes only to be loved really and acceptably by us; loved by and through him in the diſtinct regards to our love to both, acting their reſpective parts in the œconomy of our ſalvation, and loved together with him in all the acts of our love conſider'd

sider'd in their foundation, which is one and the same undivided God-head, common to both.

And here we might first observe, how the many names, titles and characters which Christ bears in scripture, of pleasant accent, whether more proper or emblematical, borrow'd from all things in nature or art, inanimate or animate, that carry in them a lovely image, and convey various ideas of beauty, use and pleasure, do of themselves recommend him to our highest love, as plainly intimated hereby to be incomparably amiable; since the whole creation is made to present him with all the several excellencies that are scatter'd over it, and meet together in no one single subject; and yet even these, though united all in him in their substantial virtues, are no perfect representations, but only obscure and distant adumbrations of his most amiable character, which is perfectly transcendental to all created glories and resemblances.

Thus, when he is stiled a rose, the rose of *Sharon*, and the lily of the vallies, a vine, an apple-tree, yea, the tree of life, the bread of life, the root and offspring of *David*, the branch, the bright and morning star, the day star from on high, the sun of righteousness, the foundation and corner stone, the rock of ages, the lamb of God; when he is call'd the brightness

of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, the image of the inviſible God, the word of God, the holy one of God; when he is called Wonderful, Counſellor, mighty God, everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord and King of glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords, our Lord and our God; when he is call'd *Immanuel*, God with us, the only begotten and well-beloved Son of God, the Son of man, the Lord from heaven, the ſecond *Adam;* when he is called, Chriſt the Lord, Jeſus the Saviour, the captain of ſalvation, a horn of ſalvation, the ſalvation of God, the wiſdom and power of God, the mercy promiſed; when he is called the angel of the covenant, the Prince of life, the King of righteouſneſs, the mediator and ſurety of the new and better covenant, the author and finiſher of our faith; when he is called the friend of ſinners, the head of the church, the apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion, our advocate, the Lord our righteouſneſs, the way, the truth and the life; when he is called the light of the world, our life, our peace, our hope, our ſhepherd, our brother, our father, our husband, and the deſire of all nations: Theſe, and ſuch like characters, our bleſſed Lord is dignified with in the word, do, at the firſt mention of them, ſtrike

our ears with a grateful sound, and insinuate into our hearts prevailing reasons for our loving the person who bears none of them in vain, but fully answers all these indearing, ingratiating descriptions of him. And thus is his name, since no empty swelling title of vanity, as worn by him, but no more than expressing the things themselves that really belong to him, and that but defectively too, because no words can do honour enough to him, according to his just dignity and worth; his name, I say, is as precious ointment pour'd forth, the fragrant odours whereof diffusing themselves all around wherever it is spread abroad, and sweetly instill'd into the hearts of all virgin Christians, cause the upright to love him. And may we find then these gracious and glorious characters of our Redeemer (for glory and grace make up his whole name) on the very hearing of them to raise in us an immediate ardor of devout affections to him, whose so justly they are. *Sol. song, i. 3, 4.*

But, to come now to the things themselves, the particular grounds of love to Christ, which his various names import and lead to.

If the greatest personal excellencies and beauties imaginable:

If the most intimate relation to God, and his manifestative glory, join'd with

the highest interest in his favour and respect:

If the most astonishing and amazing love to us:

If the neareſt, most useful and endeared relations to us:

If the most arduous and excellent works undertaken and perform'd for our service and advantage: And,

Finally, If the most numerous, valuable, important benefits conferr'd on us, or promised to us:

If any of these separately, and much more all together, render a person justly amiable, and demand from us affection both true and great to him: Then certainly our love to Christ will appear well founded and capable of all the agreeable forms and methods this passion can be expres's'd in; for all these causes and motives to love conspire at once in him, and that in the most exalted degree. Amidst all these amiables in Christ, various and full together, the fulness not excluding the variety, nor the variety reflecting on the fulness, as though it came in only in relief of deficiency, and conjunctly to perfect what was singly wanting, as is the case of all the objects of our ordinary converse; how may our love fill and regale itself without any danger of a surfeit? How may it satisfy by turns all its inclinations to

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the happiness of both the subject and object of it, from these several views of the object, well sorted together among themselves? How may it wander through an endless maze of ravishing charms, soon lost, yet quickly found again; fix'd in motion, and perpetually, but pleasingly moving while at rest; because it finds all in one, that can either employ or fill this affection? so that being come here to its proper centre, it need not move off from it, but meets with room and attractive force enough to circulate about it eternally.

1. Then, Christ is the best and worthiest object of love, and is, and will be, loved by all true Christians, on account of his personal excellencies, beauties and glories, which are truly matchless and unparallel'd.

In the person of Christ concentre all great and glorious qualities as in their proper seat. All manner of beauties and excellencies, human and divine, created and uncreated, every thing in God, or in the creature, that ever was, or can be accounted amiable, are united in his person, and possess'd by him together as his own, and that without any confusion or interfering, whereby their distinct lustres might be obscured; but subsisting with such regular harmony that as his person is thus render'd at once the receptacle of all of every

kind that is any where excellent; so by this complection his various glories are admirably temper'd, and fitted for our delightful contemplation, to the best advantage, and for the fullest, most perfect converses of our love: And then all is set off with a pleasing newness as the person of Christ in his intire manifestation and exhibition to us is of a singular constitution, whereto there is nothing similar or corresponding besides, in the whole rank of universal being, which cannot but be a perpetual spring of admiring love. For Christ in his whole person is, and ever will be mysterious, and uncommonly wonderful; according as this makes one of his glorious names, and is set first to awaken our expectation of unknown glories in him, which the bare reading of the description given of him at the same time, joining together extreams which lie so distant in our apprehensions, does abundantly confirm: "*A child born,* "*a son given to us, who is the mighty* "*God, the everlasting Father, the Prince* "*of peace, and who has the government* "*on his shoulders!*" Well may it be said, "*His name shall be called wonderful.*" For with what strange, yet pleasant surprize, must these things affect the mind?

Isai. ix. 6.

Our love then in this view of Christ forms itself into adoring, yet complacential admiration, profound veneration, high-

raised

raised respect, and the most affectionate esteem. For as we all know, excellent endowments and qualifications in a person, are adapted to excite our esteem. They are under the conduct of a good mind, which is indeed it self the chief of them, the only proper grounds of love of esteem. And such is their attractive force on ingenuous minds, that abstracted from any interest we may have in the person possessing them, they fail not to conciliate to him our value and respect: Whence it comes to pass, that lovely virtuous characters, only represented to the imagination, have a marvellous power over us to gain our approbation, and afford us pleasure. How compleatly then does Christ recommend himself to this sort of regards in their highest elevation; who has in himself really the perfection of all beauty, and that ever new, ever shining with unwaining splendor; besides a peculiar and most intimate relation also, his person thus adorn'd and excellently qualified has to us? But, to be a little more particular in pointing out his several amiable qualities, and the excellencies inherent in his person; first, as distinctly belonging to his two natures, human and divine respectively; then as resulting from the union of both these inseparably in his one undivided person. He is, first, infinitely amiable as God: He is next amia-

ble as man; and that in both the constituent parts of human nature, truly amiable even in his human body, more amiable still in his human soul; and then he is yet more amiable, and indeed most of all amible to us as God-man, the Word made flesh, and dwelling among us.

First, Then consider we Christ, as amiable in his two distinct natures of God and man, respectively. And,

1.) In the divine nature. With respect to the uncreated and infinite glories whereof, as rendering our blessed Lord originally and supremely amiable, with a love fully divine: If we believe him truly possess'd of these, as we must to maintain a faith consistent with scripture; then it is plain there can never be wanting the strongest reasons for our loving him, and that with a solemn, admiring, adoring love. For thus, the very same reasons of our loving God as God, as the first and best of beings, the fountain of all life and good, and one possess'd of unstain'd purity, inexhaustible fulness, the most consummate wisdom, the most pure and unbias'd righteousness, the most constant truth, and the most diffusive boundless goodness, conclude with equal force for our loving the Son of God in like manner, who is no less than the Father, the true God essentially, though in a distinct mode of subsistence, God over all,

1 Joh. v. 20.

all, blessed for ever. All the inexpressible, inconceivable amiables in the divine nature, which is both all-good and all-fair, since the source of all that is good and fair, throughout the whole creation, are found in Christ, as really as in the Father; for in him dwells all the fulness of the God-head bodily, that is, personally and substantially. This divine essential glory in Christ fixes both his original claim, and our original obligation to the love of him, and stamps it divine in all its respects to him under whatever character, either natively divine, or else assumed, human and mediatorial, in which he ceases not to be divine too, and to act divinely all along. This is the sole basis and foundation of our love to him, considered as it ought, as the principal and main branch of the religious worship we owe him, of love supreme, and such as is due to none but God; and when duly believ'd, cannot but procure for him all the rapturous strains and profound adorations of strictly divine love from us.

Rom. ix. 5.

Col. ii. 9.

Proceed we now to consider our blessed Lord as next amiable.

2.) In his human nature. For as though God had a mind to provide in his Son for an entire gratification of our love, that it might find every thing in him that can engage and suit it, he has by preparing for him a body, a human nature,

nature, assumed by him into personal union with himself, and by pouring out on it all the graces and embellishments that a created nature is capable of, gathered up in him all inferior created beauties in agreeable conjunction with superior and infinite excellencies, and thus fix'd him more within the reach of our love.

And though the first appearance of our Lord in our nature, was not indeed altogether like himself, was not fully worthy of the divine owner and inhabitant, being without that shining brightness and radiant lustre that may be justly accounted due to him who was in the form of God, while found in the fashion of a man, and that might be sufficient to reflect his divine glories that they might be known and acknowledged by all; but rather was such, as cast an obscuring veil on them; however, now and then they darted forth their beams through it: yet now, these darkening shadows having been long since fled away, from the time he took his seat at his Father's right hand in the heavenly places, he wears our nature in its fairest and brightest dress; such a dress as makes it far to excel and out-shine the angelical, though originally of a superior rank; such a dress as is fitted to his divine Majesty, which it is not unbecoming a God to cloath himself in, and where-

wherewith, as with a garment of light and glory, he is illuſtriouſly array'd. Pſal. civ. 1, 2.

O! the tranſcendent, ſurpaſſing beauties of the man Jeſus, now he exhibits himſelf in heaven, in the full glory of that nature which is taken into fellowſhip with the divine; and whereby his glory now comes to be ſeen as the only begotten of the Father! Beauties the moſt perfect that could be both of body and ſoul, according to the kind and quality of each: Beauties unmix'd with any polluting ſpot, or degrading blemiſh, which ever have attended our nature in every other ſubject: Beauties of the higheſt elevation, without any deficiency, or any compariſon; ſo that it is his juſt and ſingular commendation to be "*fairer than the children of men*;" fairer even in the beauty of that nature he has in common with them; as well as infinitely fairer by another kind of beauty that belongs to a nature he has, which is original to all: Beauties that are peculiarly fitted to recommend him to our love and eſteem; for we may love him now with ſuch a ſort of peculiar love, we bear to our own ſpecies, yet ſtill not reſting there, but in the God who became man; with a love of wonderful temperament, human love divine. Pſal. xlv. 2.

Here (1.) let us take a brief account ſo far as we may, or can, of the beauty and glory belonging to Chriſt's human body, as

as serving to call forth our admiring love.

Oh! could we but view the body of our Lord, as it now appears in glory, since it has put on its most illustrious form, which it will never lay aside again; we should then, no doubt, readily confess, that all the admired beauties of the most magnificent, regular and harmonious works of nature, or art in this lower world, were but superficial, rude, and comparatively deform'd pieces, having no comelineſs or glory in respect of the glory and beauty, which so much excels, of this heavenly fabrick, this tabernacle which the Lord pitch'd, not man, this chief workmanship of God.

Fanciful representations of the make and form of our Lord's glorified body must be avoided as much as possible; lest by attempting beyond our line, to set it off by pompous descriptions, we really disparage it by undue ones. Yet surely being set at the top of the material creation, it must be allow'd vastly to exceed all of this kind in every real beauty that can belong to material compositions, and to be capable of producing much more noble, agreeable and pleasurable sensations than any besides, according to the nature and diversity of senses, that will find place in that pure world that receives it; where, though

flesh

flesh and blood cannot enter, yet since refined and spiritualized matter does, there will be some sort of organs or senses fitted to perceive pleasure from the external glorious objects, especially the glorified body of our Lord: Senses, perhaps some wholly new, and others similar to what we are now endow'd with, though purged from all the grosness and dimness of them, and elevated to such a degree of acuteness and vivacity as cannot now be conceived: And all these senses of the blessed, whatever they may be, gratified to the full, from this object of various glories, the body of our Lord presented to them as their most proper object of converse. We cannot have the evidence of our present senses, which have no opportunity of proving, neither could indeed bear the proof, for the superexcelling glory and beauty which is vested in the glorified body of our Redeemer. Yet we may easily satisfy our selves of the real certainty of it, from such scriptural topicks as these, which will afford us some light into it; besides, the general convincing argument for it, from our Lord's raised character, and the fitness of the thing it self.

If heavenly matter, whatever be its peculiar texture, must greatly exceed in fineness and lustre all terrene substances, according to the apostle's estimate, when he

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1 Cor. xv. 40. tells us, *The glory of the celestial bodies is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another;* which words import a plain preference of the former to the last: And the difference is intimated in the prophet to be as great as between a throne and a footstool: And yet Christ in his human nature, body and soul, is said to have ascended up, far above all heavens, into heaven it self, into the very presence of God; and to be made higher than the heavens: How can then the exalted body of our Lord, however earthy in its extraction, in part at least, becoming now heavenly with such glorious pre-eminence, as he is emphatically call'd, with special respect to it, the heavenly man, be other than the very master-piece of all the material creation for brightness and glory?

Isai. lxvi. 1.

Eph. iv. 10.

Heb. ix. 24.

Heb. vii. 26.

1 Cor. xv. 48, 49.

If again the light and glory raying forth from Christ, manifesting himself in a vision from heaven to the apostle *Paul*, exceeded the miridian brightness of the sun; which though it is the noblest and most glorious body that belongs to our system, to whose beams gilding its several parts, we owe all the varieties of colours that are spread over its surface, and affect us with such a sensible pleasure, must yet yield to this more glorious sun set in a sphere above it; and even, before its exaltation to its present zenith of highest glory in the heavens,

Act. xxvi. 13.

vens, the body of our Lord, while he was yet on earth, for a sample of the glory natively due to it, and a prelude of what it was to be advanced to, was once on the holy mount so transfigured that his countenance shone as the sun, and his very raiment irradiated by the glory breaking forth from within, received such a tincture, as to become it self glistering, shining, exceeding white, as the light, or as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white it: What then of material substances and forms can be imagin'd equally glorious and beautiful? What such a source of all the refin'd, exalted pleasures of sensation, as the glorified body of Christ in its neareſt access, and most advantageous application as in heaven, to senses suited and duly attemper'd to it?

Matt. xvi. 2. Mar. ix. 2, 3. Luk. ix. 29.

Further, how can the body of Christ, our head, but sparkle with superlative lustre above any material nature else, when this *most glorious body*, as it is fitly call'd, or according to the literal emphasis of the original, *the body of his glory*, is to be the standard, or pattern, after which the bodies of all his members are to be fashion'd; which shall shine themselves as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and as the brightness of the starry firmament, and shall, on their being raised, be endued with incorruptibility, glory, power and spiri-

Phil. iii. 21. Matt. xiii. 41. Dan. xii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

spirituality; qualities the highest and best that can agree to material beings; and some of which are more than any matter we know of at present, can claim, or we can well conceive of.

Finally, If the glorified body of Christ may be consider'd as the eternal *Shekinah* of the divine Majesty, the heavenly temple, through which the incomprehensible glory of God will always manifest it self to the blessed inhabitants, and their exalted services be directed toward it; the standing, perpetual, and ever glorious symbol of God's favour and gracious presence, being the truth and substance of the glory that fill'd the typical tabernacle and temple under the law, that has long since vanish'd away, even before the cessation of the œconomy it self, whose chief glory it was, and so not only fully answering but transcending it, both in its nature, significant importance and use: Then certainly from this, added to the foregoing considerations, and from all laid together; it will be no hard matter to convince our selves, what peerless dignity, beauty and excellency is vested in the human body of Christ, above all the material universe besides. And as this will fill and fix in a manner every eye that sees Christ, where and as he is, and whatever sense is adapted to converse with him; so, is it not enough,

Joh. ii. 21.
Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.
Rev. xxi. 22, 23.
Ch. xxii. 1.
Rom. ix. 4, 5.

on the certain report made of it to us now, to arrest our wandering eyes which are greedily catching at the shallow and fading beauties of this world, one after another, (because at present capable of no greater and better) and to hold them in with the promise of somewhat far better in yonder upper world, where our Lord is even in that lovely human form which these eyes may behold, and which will fully gratify them. Is is not enough to unlearn us our admiration of all sensible objects in this world, where all things are wheeling about in one round of vanity, and there is nothing new, or long so, because nothing perfect; and to teach us to reserve all our admiration for that blessed world above; of which if we could but once get a glimpse, the effect would certainly be, that we should have no spirit left in us, or a will, fondly to gaze at any thing after it, in this lower world? And is it not enough then to make our hearts leap within us, at the distant prospect, and beat with strong and eager desires of being admitted into this glory of our Lord?

But neither is this all, though so much above every visible object in our world; no, nor the chief recommendation of Christ, even in his human nature to our love and affectionate esteem; there is, (2.) another view of him in the better

and nobler part of it, his human spirit, that tends to raise it yet higher; as presenting us with a superior rank of beauties, those of a moral, spiritual nature, which are much more excellent and transporting than the former to those who contemplate them with the eye of their minds, and have that taste for them, which our nature, especially as renew'd, fits us for.

The beauties and graces of the soul, in such a compound being as man, must certainly be allow'd greater and better than all pertaining to the body abstractly consider'd, beside, that the latter go over to the former; because the soul is properly the man, and the body can perceive or act nothing without the soul, which uses it for its instrument, and for which it is. And indeed the inward temper of the soul, whether good or bad, by wondrous sympathy, disposes the body to receive a correspondent impress; and by the real or supposed indications of it self from the various aspects and appearances of the body, renders the form it has agreeable or disagreeable: Whence it comes to pass, that on the one hand a corporeal form never so beautiful to the external sense, yet if found separated from a virtuous and good mind, soon loses all its charms, instead of pleasing, offends, and raises contempt instead of esteem; while, on the other hand, one

one in it self no way lovely, may yet appear so, by the connection it has with a lovely mind, and what is really so, by this means becomes doubly amiable. Now nothing in this behalf is wanting to the humanity of Christ in either part; body and soul are both perfect in him, both amiable in their kinds, and exactly suited to each other, just as one may wish. There is an equal correspondence between them, and their distinct beauties are duly adjusted in admirable proportion. His soul answers to his body, as this does to that, being mutually worthy each of other, and of none else. His pure, fair and glorious body is, besides its own abstract beauties, so much the more honourable and amiable, for being the habitation, the true image, and undeceiving picture of his more pure, fair and glorious soul; which is as much at the top of the immaterial, as the other is of the material creation.

Christ in his human soul having receiv'd the sanctifying Spirit without measure, is a character form'd every way to perfection, being repleniſh'd with all excellent endowments of mind, all moral and spiritual qualities, to a degree exceeding not only all his fellows among men, but all the angels in heaven. He was full of grace and truth. All virtue, purity, piety, benevolence, and all manner of Joh. i. 16.

goodness, took their seat in his heavenly mind, and became habitual and natural to him, the genuine native ornaments of it; in consequence whereof he never did or could do an improper unbecoming thing, but all his words, and his whole conversation were regular and graceful. His heart and life were a perfect comment on the original law of human nature, and answer'd to it so compleatly, that no impression can more, or even so much, to the seal from which it is taken off with never so much exactness, The law of his God was in his heart, and he fully copied it out in all the dispositions of his holy soul; and in all the actions of his holy life. The law could not be more perfect and punctual in requiring, than he was in performing.

He only of all the children of men, shone in the beauties of holiness, without any contracted, or even possible spot, being altogether holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, so as not to have the least communion with them in any sin. And as he knew no sin, either in the habit, or in the practice, though he lived in a world of sinners, surrounded on every side with evil examples, and having his virtue essay'd by the severest tests, and exposed to the most violent attacks of the wicked one, who yet, after all the experiments of craft and power made often on him,

Heb. vii. 26.

him, in order to corrupt him, neither found, nor left at any time, the leaſt taint on him: So he had, inwrought into his ſoul, and practiſed, all divine graces, in their entire compaſs and juſt connection, without any defect either of the due degree of each, or of the due harmony and proportion of all together. Joh. xiv. 30.

Nor are we far to ſeek for a view of theſe gracious endowments reſiding in ſuch perfect regularity and harmony in our Saviour's ſoul, with their as regular and well placed acts and fruits. For we have the lively image of them drawn out, and ſet before our eyes in the hiſtory given us by the evangeliſts, of his life and manner of converſation in our world, as perfectly exemplifying that pure and holy doctrine he taught. Here it is, we may ſee as it were his whole ſoul, what a peaceful, quiet, bliſsful ſeat it was of ſerene, calm, ſedate and compoſed virtue, unruffled either by any events from without, or by any unruly luſts and jarring paſſions from within, but poſſeſſing all its faculties and operations in right order; his judgment always ſettling proper meaſures of conduct, his will ever obeying its dictates, and his affections under the rule of both. Here we may ſee, how in his heart reign'd the love of God and the love of man, each in its full empire and dominion, and with

united lustre; how the works of piety and charity divided between them his whole time, which was parted out among them with admirable discretion; how he went about doing good to men in all manner of beneficial offices, during the day time, and that he might not be shut out from the seasons of devotion while he devoted the whole day to men, he often spent the hours of a late evening, or an early morning before day, and sometimes whole nights, with his God. Here we may see his faith and hope, though prov'd with the sharpest conflicts and most perplexing difficulties, still firmly and steadily reposing it self on God, without yielding either to a diffident anxiety, or to a negligent security. Here we may see the fire of a true and regular zeal, that grace of nicest management, lighted up uniformly in his breast, and breaking out into a flame both shining and burning, pure as well as strong, bright as well as active, equally purged from the dusky vapours of furious unhallow'd passions, as from the cold damps of lukewarmness and cowardice, that it might neither be polluted, nor yet smothered, spending it self in the cause of God, not his own private interest, burning first inward, and then only outward, and consuming himself rather than others. Here we may see him acting unfeign'd real humility,

Joh. ii. 17. Psal. lxix. 10.

mility, without pride or affectation on the one hand, and yet without suffering his character to sink when it was proper to support it on the other; strictness and severity without moroseness and austerity; a generous contempt and absolute conquest of the world without an unsociable and cowardly retreat from it; perfect patience without any mixture of impatience; true love to men's persons without any love to their vices; affability to others without any snare to himself; wonderful condescention without the least flattery, or stooping to any thing really mean, and which betray'd the want of a true greatness of soul; meekness without wrath, even under some of the greatest provocations; impartial truth, honesty, courage and integrity without hypocrisy, fear, or caring for any man, his enemies being judges; wisdom ready on all occasions and emergencies yet ever match'd with innocency; authority with mildness; gravity with chearfulness; universal benevolence and publick spiritedness regulated only by prudence, and his commission in its particular effects, and exercised with a constant studied avoidance of popular applause; an entire devotedness to God in all acts of obedience, seeking his glory not his own, delighting to do his will, and making the service of God his element, his meat and drink; and express-

Matt. xxii. 16.

Joh. iv. 34.

ing as perfect a reſignation to the appointing will of God in all his uncommon ſufferings.

In a word, then here we ſee as with our eyes in the character of our bleſſed Lord decypher'd in the ſcriptures, what *Plato* ſo much magnifies, as what, if it could be had, would not fail of exciting marvellous love and admiration in the minds of men, but which we may ſearch for all the world over and ſhall not find elſewhere, namely the form it ſelf, and as it were the face of virtue. For on the man Jeſus this lovely image is ſtamp'd: Virtue and all goodneſs was transfuſed into him, tinctured him all over, and breathed quite through him, through his whole ſoul, through every look, through every word, (for grace was pour'd into his lips) through every action.

Pſal. xlv. 2.

What other is, or was he but virtue perſonalized, animated virtue, living piety, living holineſs, living goodneſs, goodneſs and grace all over?

And ſeeing him now in his word thus repreſenting compleatly the moral image of the Deity, in our nature; and knowing him ſtill to live, and bear the ſame image in heaven, in all its orient brightneſs, ſet off there in a light connatural to it, which is yet a foil to his tranſcendent purity, though not like the thick ſhade of the darkneſs of ſin in our world; and this

with

with the addition of the oil of perfect gladness, wherewith he is anointed above all his fellows, without any mixtures of heaviness, which often over-powered it here: Shall we not on these accounts pronounce him the lovely Man? The loveliest of all men? Shall we not call on our selves often as we are now able to behold this illustrious Man Jesus; to look intently upon him with an eye of faith and steady meditation, and thus contemplating him, to yield up ourselves to all the transports of admiring love and complacential esteem, till our love comes to be swallow'd up and perfected in the immediate sight of him? Must a common character of goodness among men, mix'd as it always is, be allow'd to deserve our love and esteem? And how much more then does Christ, one unmix'd, perfect and unchangeable? And accordingly ought to engage our highest esteem and veneration; especially since in all these his spiritual graces he is made the head of the saved, their exemplar, and the pattern to which they must be conform'd, as well as in his bodily beauties. Joh. xix. 5.

Thus then our Lord Jesus Christ appears to be the most amiable object view'd in both his natures, divine and human distinctly; and worthy indeed of all the admiration and esteem our nature is master of. But to this must be yet further added, to crown

crown all, and to render Christ's person most amiable to us,

Secondly, The union of both these so different and distinct natures as finite and infinite, without division or confusion, in his mysterious person, which becomes hereupon one complex principle of agency, to which are to be referr'd up the qualities and acts of either nature; whereby, as has been before observ'd, an uncommon ground is laid for our admiring Christ on account of the surprizing singular novelty of the object.

The amiableness of Christ's whole person springs out of, and reflects back on the distinct beauties and glories of both his natures, but then is an advance on them with respect to us, as it collects them to a point, unites and gathers them into one view, and so recommends them by this conjunction with more advantage to our admiring, esteeming love. This constitution of his person is peculiarly adapted to set Christ before us at once both in a most familiar and in a most astonishing light. It makes him the wonder and delight of angels; and how much more ought it of men, to whom it is in a special manner most alluring, charming and engaging, as he has hereby done an honour to our nature, superior to any conferr'd on the angelick. This fairly accounts for all the dignities

dignities and pre-eminences of the human nature of Christ, which might seem to be above the lot of any creature, as being but a suitable grant to the man whom the Son of God is pleased to unite to himself: And this even exalts the human excellencies, great as they are in themselves (and yet not great enough because finite, to be the adequate object of our faculties and affections) to a still higher pitch of glory by the reflection and overshadowing of the divine on them; whereby they contract a relative immensity in Christ's person.

This, on the other hand, brings God down to man as near as he can come, while it raises man up to God, as high as he can ascend. What method could be contrived so happy, to settle God in the best and dearest affection of creatures, especially such as were fallen off from their love and allegiance to him; than for him to reveal himself to them through one in their own nature, personally united to one in the divine? By this means the glories of pure divinity, which would oppress instead of attracting our love, become familiarised and fitted to our converse: The terrors that must needs arise from unveil'd deity to guilty creatures, are allay'd, and hid under the veil of humanity thrown over it; a veil render'd bright enough to transmit all divine glories, that there might be

be scope enough for our love, and yet so accommodated to present them all with a friendly favourable aspect on us, that our love may have free access to them: A veil, which however brighten'd, it was infinite condescention indeed, in the eternal Word, to put on and wear; but then it appears of absolute necessity, and of the greatest advantage and consequence to us, who could not come before a naked God and live. For this constitution of the Person of Christ, is to be consider'd further, as a main and fundamental qualification of all his mediatorial transactions. His personal glories as God-man found and imply his mediatorial excellencies, his peculiar incomparable fitness to be our Mediator and Saviour. For in virtue of it he has at once and together, a divine fulness and sufficiency to save us with an human congruity and meetness, for applying it in a manner most suitable and proper to our condition.

Heb. x. 20, 21.

On the whole view then of his person and personal excellencies, which are fundamental to, and in a manner comprehensive of all the reasons of our love to Christ, and where, though not ordinarily beginning at least in that extent we have consider'd his person in, it must always terminate and end: May we not now venture such questions as these, with all rational thinking persons to return a proper answer

to

to them themselves. What think ye of Christ? Is he not transcendently amiable in himself? Does not this object make the fullest and largest provision for our highest admiration and love of esteem? Can there be any where found one so deserving of our affections, and on whom they may so fully and adequately rest? Ought not *this branch of the Lord to be beautiful and glorious; this fruit of the earth to be excellent and comely* in the eyes of all before whom he grows up? Isai. iv. 2.

On the other hand, may we not hope such disparaging questions as these will for ever be silenced, shamed and exploded with that contempt and infamy they justly deserve? "*What is the Christian's beloved,* Sol. song "*more than another beloved,* that he should v. 9. "be so mightily extoll'd? What shall we "see or find in Christ, that our love should "single him out from all other objects, to "cleave to in a superlative manner? What "are these his so distinguishing and excel- "ling beauties, that he should be desired, "esteem'd and admired above every thing "besides? Is not his person professedly "mysterious and incomprehensible? And, "why may he not be as much neglected, "as he is little understood; while we con- "tent our selves with loving what is more "familiar to us, and we are better ac- "quainted with?" For may it not as well

be asked, whether there be any such affection as love in human nature, or any object at all fitted to it, to rest in, as whether Christ be not a most proper and compleat object to it, who is found on the most credible report, and will be more and more found, the more we search, really to possess the most agreeable, rare and harmonious mixture of all exalted beauties human and divine, material and immaterial, in himself?

Can there be then a greater absurdity, than to demur on his claim to superior love, who has superior amiableness to all creatures; to allow inferior and partial excellencies their attractive force, and to deny to superior entire perfections their proportional power over us to gain and perfect our love? And what, ought the mystery of his person, to sink its glorious reality? Must he be thought the less amiable, the more incomprehensible he is? Must the wonders that go into his name lessen our esteem by encreasing our admiration? Shall that detract from his amiableness, which ought in reason to inhance it, that he has more beauties and glories in his person than our dim eye can pierce through, or we shall ever come to an end of? Must it be an exception to him, that he has, what it is a just exception against other amiable objects that they want, a depth,

depth, a fulneſs, a perfection of excellency? That whereas creature-beauties are all fading and languiſhing, his are permanent, ever freſh and new, and alway retain their luſtre; that whereas theirs are ſhallow and ſcanty, ſoon ſeen through, and exhauſted as ſoon as ſeen; his are ſo full and great, ſo boundleſs and immenſe, that we may never hope to ſee (and 'tis well for us we can't ſee) their end and utmoſt perfection, while we may expect a perpetual growing entertainment of our love from them? And it is on this account of their real tranſcendency to all meerly created excellencies, that our contracted underſtandings (and no wonder when they are unequal to the full comprehenſion of any thing) ſink under the weight of this ſo big glory, and our language much more faulters in the expreſſion of it. While then we know, and certainly believe the report of the various and ſtrange glories of Chriſt's moſt amiable perſon, taken in the ſimplicity of the ſcripture repreſentation: While the foundation of our admiring love is laid not in abſolute ignorance, but ſubſtantial certain knowledge, ſo far as our minds are capable; it is an unſpeakable advantage to our love for the terminating and perfecting it, that we know, there is infinitely more that is amiable and glorious in the perſon of Chriſt our belov-

ed than we can comprehend, or ever may search out to perfection: Which cannot but raise vast hopes for the future, while it kindles the noblest admiration for the present. What remains therefore, but that we make up for the narrowness of our conception by the enlargedness of our admiration! *

II. Another ground a-kin to the former, and serving to shape our love to Christ into much the same form of esteem and admiration; is the intimate relation which Christ, as God-man mediator, has to God, and his manifestative glory joined with his highest interest in his Father's respect and favour.

Next to his own inherent personal amiableness, Christ may be justly consider'd as meriting our love on his Father's account: And that,

First, On account of the compleat provision made in and by him, for the manifestative glory of God appearing with greatest advantage. Never was God glorified, or indeed could be, as in his incarnate Son our Mediator, who is the very image, and brightest mirror of the invisible God: In whom he professes himself glorified eminently and to content: In whom *the face of his throne* is as it were revealed, *which is held back by a cloud spread over it* in all his other works.

Col. i. 15. Isai. xlix. 3. Joh. xii. 28. Job xxvi. 9.

* Here a pause may be made dividing this sermon into two parts.

It

It is *in the face of Jesus Christ* we have *the knowledge of the glory of God; in seeing him we see the Father*, and by him *the only begotten Son, who lay in his bosom* have the Father *revealed* to us, as we could not by any besides. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Joh. xiv. 9. Joh. i. 18.

To convince us the better of the transcendent excellency of the manifestation of God's glory in Christ, and how much of our love he deserves on that account, let us briefly survey the peculiar characters of distinguishing eminency which belong to it above others.

It is then full and entire. All the glorious attributes of God are in Christ display'd together, and all in the highest degree. No other scheme ever did, or can be conceived capable of uniting them, as this does in their integrity and full lustre. Creation could make way but for some to appear. The ordinary and stated methods of providence do no more: But it is reserved for the peculiar of Christ in his person and mediation, to manifest all of God at once, and that in the most admirable combination of his various glories. Being the reconciling medium of divine justice and mercy in a nice conjuncture, when they seem'd to clash, each having powerful reasons for not being neglected; and yet how to make them consist together here was the difficulty, which Christ how-

ever has surmounted: By virtue of this reconciliation he made way for every perfection of God, coming with a fulness of glory into the design he was managing and cooperating in it with more distinct efficacy, and yet more harmonious conjunction than any of them do, in any other dispensation.

It is central: It draws into it all other ways God has ever taken of manifesting his glory, either in heaven or in earth, in creation or in providence, among angels as well as men. For *all things both in heaven and earth, are gathered to an head in Christ. In him do all things consist.* All the primitive glories of creation owe their continuance to our Redeemer at least as to our access to them, and so run into, and mix their friendly rays with the new and greater glories of redemption. *All the glories of his Father's house*, even the whole universe, *are hung on the Son*; who therefore will appear at last with this fourfold *glory, his own, his Father's, his holy angels, his saints.*

Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 17, 18, 19, 20

Isai. xxii. 24.

Luk. ix. 26. 2 Thess. i. 10.

It is most intimate and propitious. How could God reveal himself more nearly to us, than through the flesh of his Son? How more graciously than through the gift of him to us, by the means of his death to procure and dispense to us eternal life. All God's attributes here, even his vindictive justice

justice and holiness, which appear in the most solemn dress they ever put on to render him venerable; do yet act under and promote the reign of grace, to render him supremely amiable. Rom. v. 21. Eph. i. 6, 7, 8, 11.

It is perfectly safe: And ever secure, from being perverted by an undue exaltation of the medium, to the dishonour of God the end, since means and end meet in one.

It is durable and everlasting. For God will never cease to manifest his glory through our *Immanuel*, though there may be different ways of that manifestation. When the heavens and earth shall be no more, and so cease being a theatre whereon God's glory shall be display'd as now it is: Yet *his salvation in Christ Jesus*, and the glory accruing to him thereby, *shall be for ever, and his righteousness never be abolish'd. The throne of God and of the Lamb will ever be in the new* Jerusalem: They are set too close together, ever to be parted asunder. *The glory of God and the Lamb will be the light thereof:* And they are incorporated too intimately ever to be divided. Isai. li. 6. Rev. xxii. 3. Rev. iii. 21. Rev. xxi. 23.

In fine, *It is deeply mysterious* having such traces of manifold wisdom, such a compass both in the contrivance and execution, that none can thoroughly penetrate into its depths, or fully comprehend it: And yet *it is most easily and familiarly*

adapted, above any other way to convey into the mind the knowledge of God for spiritual uses, as experience sufficiently declares.

Such being then the peculiar excellency of the manifestation of God's glory through Christ; considering how sacred and precious the divine glory is to every pious soul, even above every other concern, and that a proportionable esteem is due to things according to the impressions of God on them, and their reference to God's glory as the original standard of their excellence, and the value that is to be put on them: Then let us judge whether our Lord as condescending to become the Father's servant to this end, don't challenge our highest esteem on this score over and above what he merits from us by his original intrinsic excellencies. And does he not do so also,

Secondly, On account of the superlative love the Father has for him, testified by words and deeds? For he not only loves him with an ineffable love as one from eternity with him, between whom and himself there always was and will be the highest mutual complacency; but he loves him too, first and best of all others, as his chosen servant, who was under the mediatorial character in our nature to fulfil all his pleasure, and secure to him the richest revenues

venues of manifestative glory. And this his love to him he is not wanting to declare in the most publick manner, and with an apparent air of pleasure, that all may understand the pre-eminence he has in his favour and esteem to all. Witness that ancient oracle given out by the Father concerning him. *Behold, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth.* And the other twice uttered of, or to him in the days of his flesh, by an extraordinary voice from heaven: *This is my beloved Son;* or, *Thou art my beloved Son; in whom I am well pleased.* Answerable to which special declarations of singular respect, are all the honours done, all the highest marks of dignity and distinction, as instances and evidences of uncommon and extraordinary favour, actually conferr'd on him by the Father: In his raising him from the dead, setting him at his own right hand, and giving him a name above every name, and authority above and over all. Thus is the man Jesus the Mediator between God and men, even as such loved and dignified by God: Loved first by the grace of union with the eternal Word, which was the greatest proof of a distinguishing favour, and loved ever after with all suitable testimonies of respect in and upon the discharge of his mediatorial work, even to the first place

Isai. xlii. 1. Matt. iii. 17. *Ch.* xvii. 5. Mar. i. 11. *Ch.* ix. 7. Luk. iii. 22. *Ch.* ix. 35 2 Pet. i. 17.

of power and dignity in heavenly places, by the grace of a super-eminent unction.

And is he then thus *chosen of God and precious? the beloved? God's dear Son, the Son of his love; whom he loved even before the foundation of the world?* Then sure this view of him should it self render him amiable to us. For should we not love as God does; and those best whom he loves best, who is the truest judge of worth and merit? Should not our love follow, and suffer it self to be directed by God's? Is it not in reason an additional incentive to our love of Christ, that with his own personal amiable qualities, he possesses so full and singular a place in the Father's love: Which is the source too of all his human and mediatorial excellencies? As we love Christ then for his own sake, so we must for his Father's sake. As he stands forth with the Father for the supreme object of our love as God: He ought most reasonably to stand next to the Father in our affection, as man and mediator, because he is both best, and the Father loves him best. We should love him as God's friend and chief favourite: As the man the King of heaven delights to honour.

1 Pet. ii. 4, 6. Eph. i. 6. Col. i. 13. Joh. xvii. 24.

And thus we have consider'd hitherto, the grounds of love to Christ, that respect him as amiable in himself, or in the relation he bears to God. Come we now

from theſe more abſolute views of him, to thoſe that are relative to our ſelves; which will bring him nearer within the embraces of our love, and add peculiar endearments to our eſteem. For great excellencies and qualifications in one vaſtly ſuperior to us with whom we have no concern or relation, rather ſtrike us with an awful veneration, than fill us with a pleaſing affection toward him, and excite more of a reverential diſtant admiration, than a friendly diſpoſition in our hearts; but it is the intereſt we our ſelves have, or may hope to have, in a perſon of a valuable character, an acceſs to, or converſe with him under ſome favourable relation, with ſome experience, not only of his generous diſpoſitions in general, but of his kindneſs to our ſelves in particular; it is this that gives love its proper hue, and perfects it in its entire form. This renders it mutual, familiar, friendly and grateful, and puts an inexpreſſible tenderneſs into it. And while it thus enlarges its ſcope by taking in theſe new and agreeable ideas, nothing is detracted from the former of eſteem and veneration, which are rather heighten'd hereby, becauſe thoſe good and excellent qualities which raiſe them come by virtue of our own intereſt to be preſented in a nearer and ſtronger light before our minds. And thus then our

bleſſed Lord engages the warmeſt love of our hearts, as well as merits our higheſt eſteem, above every object beſide, from the many agreeable views that may be taken of his intimate concern with us, and ours with him; whoſe whole perſon is indeed ours in a peculiar manner, conſtituted as it is with an immediate reſpect to the children of men, being given to us, and having a ſpecial, moſt favourable aſpect on us. Wherefore, further to ſee how well grounded a Chriſtian's love to his Lord is, and that under the tendereſt forms of gratitude, ingenuity and friendſhip, as well as the noble ones of honour and admiring eſteem, which two muſt never be parted aſunder: We are to conſider him henceforward under characters relative to our ſelves; of which ſort are all the remaining grounds of his amiableneſs: The firſt and leading one whereof that comes next in order to be diſplay'd, is,

III. The love he has, and hath expreſs'd toward men, which is great even to aſtoniſhment. There is nothing that more familiarly and engagingly invites, or more reaſonably demands love than love. It is the proper force and native tendency of love in the object to beget love in the ſubject. Love eaſily propagates it ſelf like fire kindling fire, and one flame lighting another.

another. Love is the great magnet of love, of almoſt univerſal force, whoſe attractive virtue is known and experienced all over the world. For who are there, that are not diveſted of all humanity, who will not love thoſe that love them? *Do not even Publicans*, as our Lord obſerves, perſons of the moſt profligate character *do this?* Human nature is ſo framed, as readily to follow, though not ſo ready to lead love. So ſtrong is its propenſity and diſpoſition this way, that the hearty love and good will of one who has nothing elſe to recommend him, is acceptable to ingenuous minds; and nothing, where there are the moſt recommending qualities, does ſo much win love as it ſelf. But oh! there is no love that ſo powerfully commands love as Chriſt's. And there is no Chriſtian but feels the ſweet and ſtrong conſtraints of it to draw and bind his heart with inviolable attachment to him. *The love of Chriſt conſtrains him* to love him again with reciprocal affection. When Chriſt has, along with the innumerable graces and beauties of his perſon, a love to us alſo, and that ſuch *a love as ſurpaſſes knowledge:* When there is in him ſuch a rare conjunction of beauty and love, each in its higheſt exaltation; nay, when his love may be conſider'd as a chief character in his perſonal excellencies, and as

Matt. v. 46.

2 Cor. v. 14.

Eph. iii. 19.

apparelling all his other glories: what possibly can be suited to this representation of him, if not love on our part? Love both of highest esteem and admiration which is due to his wonderful love, as well as wonderful person, and love of exalted gratitude? Where can the equal law of reciprocal love, in reason, exert it self with so much justice and strength, as here? How can it be but that *we love him who first loved us?* And how can we ever think we can love him enough, if we do but believe and perceive the love he hath toward us, what manner of love is it? Now all Christians in some measure perceiving this, therefore love Christ so much (and who can blame them for it?) and still will do it more and more, the stronger and livelier sense they have of his love on their hearts. This they may well expect will warrant all the love they have, being laid out on one who has been so much beforehand with them, and gone so much beyond what they can ever reach, in love. For let us a little consider, what are the things that render the love of one to another most peculiarly engaging and attractive of an echoing love; and see if they are not all found in the love of Christ toward us Christians, in the most eminent and distinguish'd degree.

1 Joh. iv. 19.

Is not his love then a love of ancient date? Was it not love from the beginning?

ning? prior not merely to our love, that were indeed a small matter, considering how slowly our love advances; nor only prior to our want of his love, pity and kindness, and withal prior to, and preventive of all our applications to him for the exercise of his love on us; which how engaging a circumstance in love is that? But prior to our very being: prior to the foundation of the world? How early did love find a place in Christ's breast, so that it could not be earlier? No sooner did he see us, but seeing, he loved us: on the mere foresight of our sin and misery, he determined his love with a suitable relief, toward us. *His eye instantly affected his heart.* From eternity then he pitch'd his first love on us; and even then out of love provided for our cure before we had receiv'd our wound, for our healing before we had contracted any disease, for our deliverance before we had been ruin'd, for our redemption before we were enthrall'd, for our recovery before we were lost, for our rising before we were fallen, and for our advancement to heaven before we became heirs of hell. Thus was our kind Redeemer, before time, *rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.* How wondrously alluring, how powerfully attractive is this his love of ancient rise, of eternal

Prov. viii. 31.

eternal beginning, or rather, which was without beginning?

Again, *Is not his love perfectly free and generous?* It was purely disinterested and voluntary, flowing out of his own heart with absolute liberty and sovereign dominion over its own acts, without any necessity or impelling motive from without himself. His love was his own properly and entirely: what he was fully master of, and might let out just as he pleased. Not so much as his Father's command, did prescribe to his love in the original emanations of it; though it settled the measures he was to take in pursuing the ends of both his own and Father's love; which were equally free and joint causes of our salvation, notwithstanding the first motion toward it in point of order is assign'd to the Father. But with respect to our selves it is absolutely disengaged, that there is not the least colour of any reason from us, to excite it, but enough for ever to have diverted it from us, had it not found a reason within himself; it self been its own reason. And here concur all the circumstances which on the part of the object considered by it self, or in relation to the subject at any time ingratiate love, to render the love of Christ towards us most generous, free and engaging. For is that generous love

Joh. x. 17, 18.

love which is exercised to a perfect stranger, though he should prove deserving? Is that still more generous love, which is exercised to a mean person, one greatly inferior to him who loves him; nay, to a worthless person, one destitute of any good quality to recommend him, and known to have many bad, disagreeable and odious qualities? And is that the most generous love of all, which is exercised to an enemy, who is known to hate us, and to have done many things with a wicked purpose of heart, injurious and displeasing to us: And to love such an one so as to make him our friend, especially when we have him so much in our power that we can ruin him at pleasure; supposing this could be done consistently with the rules of prudence? Now all these characters of noble generosity agree to the love of Christ toward us. For he has loved us, when we were in a state of alienation, all the ties of correspondence and acquaintance between him and us being at an end. Not only so; but he has loved us, when not only infinitely below him and mean in comparison of him, as our creature-state always implies us to be, but when altogether loveless, void of all good qualities, and full of all evil ones. Nor only this; but he has loved us when enemies both to him and his Father, insolent and obstinate rebels,

and

1 Joh. iv. 10. and lying too under his feet. *He loves us not as though we loved him:* But when he knows our hearts are full of desperate enmity against him. And he loves us in this state so as to make us friends, in consistence with a perfectly wise, as well as amazingly good conduct. For he designs by his love to work the enmity out of our hearts; and accomplishes it effectually where he pleases, by conferring on us out of his pure grace a principle of love to himself and by revealing in us his own unparallel'd love; as an irresistible motive to draw it out. For what heart can be so hard, that may not be soften'd by the strong and piercing fire of the Redeemer's love brought close to it? What enmity can be so deep, even though it be nothing less than a fix'd antipathy, as to withstand the charm of his love; a love so ingenuous and disinterested, as to pass on us when justly worthy of his wrath, as well as altogether unworthy of his favour, a love for pure love's sake, and equally free from subsequent as from antecedent obligations, since he had nothing to expect from us in return, no not the least spark of reciprocal love, but what his own love and grace must excite?

Zeph. iii. 17. Again; *Is not his love unchangeable and everlasting love?* He rests in his love. He is no fickle but constant lover and friend.

Having

Having loved his own, he loves them to the end: And never casts them out of his affections, however deserving to be rejected and abhorr'd, but is still overcoming their evil by his good. His love fixes in him an unalterable purpose of pursuing the saving design it has engag'd him in, whatever it cost him, and he never lays it aside. Joh. xiii. 1.

Is not his love too of a distinguishing nature? The distinction is obvious which it makes between our world and that of the angels who fell. *For verily he took not on him the nature*, he took not any hold *of angels* for their relief, *but of the seed of* Abraham *only.* He shut up the bowels of his compassions against sinning angels while he drew them out toward sinning men. And whatever reasons he with his Father had to give us the preference, that the divine wisdom might have a part to act here as in every thing, and no doubt a glorious part it acted; yet these lessen not the grace to us, which had full liberty in it self to have taken which nature it pleased, as to any claims of either on it, without rendering an account of its matters; and here it becomes us mainly to rest it, acknowledging the winning charms of love so peculiar and differencing; which is always allow'd to carry uncommon endearments in it. Nor will that further distinc- Heb. ii. 16.

tion

tion made by the love of Christ, even in our world, in virtue whereof it is that any become real partakers of Christ, pass for nothing with such who perceive the peculiar sense of that appropriating lan-
Gal. ii. 20. guage of the apostle, *Who loved me, and gave himself for me;* and can adopt it to themselves.

Lastly, *Is not the love of Christ manifold and exceeding fruitful?* Does it not take to it self every agreeable form that love can appear in, suitably to our state and circumstances; and produce all manner of rich and excellent fruits for those who are interested in it. Is not his a love of
Isai. lxiii. 10. sympathy and tender pity, causing him to suffer with, as well as for those he loves? Is it not a love of gentleness and forbearance? Is it not a love of complacency, whenever in honour it can be so, and yet neither over-much reserv'd, and proceeding with too curious delicacy here? For as his love from the first did not altogether disdain this name, in view of what he design'd and undertook to bring his people to, whence we read of his *delights* being even
Prov. viii. 31. then *with the sons of men:* So it assumes and conforms to it in fact, when any real, though very imperfect fruits of grace and goodness actually appear on them, insomuch that it is the next wonder in his love, to the great things it does for them,

to

to be pleased with instead of despising the small things it finds in them? Is it not a love of liberal beneficence equal to the benevolence of his heart, and all our wants, *a love not in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth*, being fruitful of works the most condescending and serviceable, and benefits the most necessary and valuable, and taking to it self relations of greatest intimacy and endearedness, which makes it a love of friendship?

But this leads us to the remaining particulars; of which the next is.

IV. To consider the kind and useful relations our blessed Saviour is pleased to sustain and answer toward Christians, as another ground of their love to him. And what indeed can be supposed more sweetly to allure, and to give a more familiar and enlarged scope to their love than this consideration, which, as it brings down his love, with its fruits, more nearly within their view and reach, so must needs proportionably raise up theirs to him with greater force and compass? For our love becomes most suitably to this view of Christ, beside its being a love of gratitude and benevolence, partly a love of desire, aspiring after an interest in, or further communion with him, so far as we are sensible of having not attained them; partly a love

of delight and complacency resting herein with unspeakable pleasure so far as attain'd. These are the peculiar and special acts of love to Christ which correspond to his relations; because they are the means of conveying all our happiness from Christ. For we can have no advantage from him, but as we are related to him. And this fixes our love to Christ in its most strict and full exercise; for it causes an approximation and union of persons, and so consequently a mutual union of hearts and affections. No relations can be more expressive of charity and kindness than those which Christ condescends to bear to his people. They are the ties, pledges and vehicles of his love to them, whereby he binds them to his own heart; and no wonder then if they prove cords of love, to bind their hearts to him. His love forms them and his love fills them. For they are none of them in him more expressive of kindness in their meaning, than they are executive of it in their accomplishment. He is not content with a general relation to Christians, arising from his partaking of the same nature with them, though that is the foundation and pledge of all the particular relations he stands in to them, and has a special aspect on the children given to him; or arising from the work he does for them,

1 Joh. v. 11, 12.

Heb. ii. 14.

and

and benefits he confers on them, simply consider'd; but he assumes a more special and intimate relation to them still; a relation which not only comprehends his most beneficial offices of their prophet, priest and king, but secures the effects of each to them in the happiest manner; a relation which makes himself and them mystically one; a relation whereby they are reckoned to him as his own, as members of his body, reduced under him as their head both of representation and influence; a relation by virtue whereof they can claim himself saying, *Their beloved is theirs, and they are his*, as well as his benefits; a relation therefore whereby all his mediatorial fulness redounds to their use and advantage, whereby his satisfaction and righteousness, the result of his obedience unto death, becomes theirs for their perfect and sole justification before God; his grace becomes theirs, his glory theirs, and in a word, all their happiness is derived to them from him in the most honourable, glorious, obliging and engaging manner imaginable. This relation of Christ to Christians as their head, is for the assuring their hearts of his love, and of the conveyance of all its fruits to them in the most agreeable advantageous manner; diversify'd by all the forms of human relations of friendly name and use. *He is not ashamed to call them* Heb. ii. 11.

brethren: And treats them as such with a brotherly and equal kind of affection. He assumes the Father to them, and exercises to them as his dear children a fatherly pity and care. He owns them for his spouse, and behaves toward them with all the tenderness and kind concern of a most affectionate husband; whence he is fitly proposed as an example of that love which this relation requires of those who sustain it among men; and is hereby proved to have as real and certain a relation or union to his church, truly analogous, but only transcendental to this, and all relations whatsoever of nearest intimacy and strongest affection, that pass between men and men. This is then the Christian's friend; his best and chiefest friend; his universal friend; his friend of every name and character that friendship can put on: And ought he not then to be his beloved? How can this chain of friendly relations filled with corresponding affections on Christ's part, but be felt by every Christian, and draw him with sweet yet irresistible force into the arms of his Lord, both to answer on his part the sacred engagements of them, with all suitable returns of grateful love and dutiful carriage, as well as to enjoy more and more of the sweets of them? Oh! what a pity is it that this chain of mutual endeared love between Christ and his church should

Heb. ii. 14. 18.

Eph. v. 25,-32.

Sol. song, v. 16.

ſhould be broken in any of its links, by denying the reality, or juſt and full import of the union and conſequent communion the church has with Chriſt, as her head, in his perſon and righteouſneſs firſt, and ſo in his benefits, whereby his love comes to be leſſen'd, and ours proportionably weaken'd, by being deprived of ſo alluring, ſo uniting an argument for it? Let us then ſee that we keep it whole and entire; and ſo both Chriſt's love and ours together, will remain whole, and have ſecured to them their entire ſcope and ſweeteſt interchanges. Let us never break theſe dear and ſacred bands of mutual love between Chriſt and Chriſtians aſunder, that our love may never loſe any of its attractives, eſpecially one ſo cloſe and forcible. Let us preſerve theſe channels always open, that his love may flow out to us, and ours back again to him in eaſy, full and pleaſant ſtreams.

V. But proceed we to conſider the excellent and arduous works Chriſt has undertaken and done, or is yet doing, for the ſervice of Chriſtians, as further founding their love to him. For if ever any ſervices performed by one for another muſt be allow'd to deſerve love; thoſe of Chriſt for ſinful miſerable men muſt much more; being the moſt marvellous and ſurprizing

atchievements that were ever wrought, the most necessary to us, and the most condescending and self-denying to himself. Oh! what has he done, or rather not done to serve our souls in their indigent and helpless circumstances? He who came down from heaven to earth on purpose to relieve our misery; not to condemn and destroy, but to seek and save lost sinners; not to be ministred unto, but to minister to man's necessity, as well as God's glory; and that in such astonishing methods of laborious debasing service, as never any submitted to beside himself, even so far as to give his very life a ransom for many. It was no light and common work which our salvation imposed on our Redeemer, in order to accomplish it honourably and effectually. It was such as would prove his love to the utmost, and put it to the sharpest, most severe and difficult trial that love could ever be exposed to. It was a work of deepest abasement, and of the most grievous sufferings that could be gone through. It was a work not of mere power, which however justly meriting grateful affections, would have been an easy task for him who had all things at his command; but a work of satisfaction and atonement for the sins of his people. It was a work wherein he was to approach unto

Joh. iii. 17.
Luk. ix. 56.
Ch. xix. 10.
Matt. xx. 28.

unto God, cloath'd with all his awful majeſty, and appearing in the terrors of unrelenting juſtice, reſolved to vindicate the honour of his violated law and affronted authority, with a price of ſufficient value, fully to recompenſe the wrongs our ſins had offered to him, to repair the diſorders which had been introduced into his moral government, together with the whole lower creation, and to render it a thing becoming an infinitely bleſſed and perfect Being, to forgive ſin and reſtore ſinners to his favour, as fully or more ſo than at firſt. And ſo conſequently, it was a work (for how could it be otherwiſe?) of immenſe difficulty, toil, labour, humiliation and ſuffering: For *he made himſelf in all things like to us, ſin only excepted;* excepted as to the inheſion of it, which was abſolutely remote from him, but not excepted as to the imputation of it; for *he bore our ſins in his own body*, and ſubmitted to have *the iniquities of us all laid upon him*, that he, as our ſurety, might become accountable and anſwer for them, and *as the Lamb of God* ſacrificed for us, *might take them away.* He voluntarily took up our legal ſtate with our human nature; *being made under the law*, at the ſame time as *made of a woman.* He placed himſelf under the ſame obligations to the law, and in the ſame circumſtances of ſuffering ac-

Heb. ii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Iſai. liii. 6. Gal. iv. 4.

cording to the sentence of the law which he found us in, or liable to; that so he might on an equal and just ground, be in this double comfortable sense *the end of the law to us;* the end and perfection of it, for righteousness, which we could never attain our selves, but do now in him; and the end or determination of its penal sanction, that it might not remain any longer in force against us, in whose stead he underwent it. Thus finding us obliged to the perfect obedience the law requires, but utterly unable to perform it, and so cut off from the remotest possibility of ever obtaining that life it was ordained to convey; he yields in our place an obedience to it absolutely perfect and meritorious of eternal life, and gives this his righteousness to us to become our title to heaven and everlasting happiness. Finding us press'd down under an immense debt of transgressions incurring a just recompence of reward; he takes it on himself, pays it off and discharges us, by suffering for it in his own person. Finding us in prison, bound with the fetters of our own iniquities, held in the cords of sin and misery, and reserved to the day of wrath and vengeance; he comes to us and visits us in our prison, and is content to be kept there for a time in our room, 'till he should satisfie for our crimes, that we might be

Rom. x. 4.

Isai. liii. 8.

set

set at liberty. Finding us *under a curse*, *he is made a curse for us, that we might be redeemed from it, and inherit the blessing*. Finding us doomed to death, he dies for us that we might live. Finding us lying under the edge of the flaming sword of vindictive justice, he steps between us and it, wards off the impending blow from our devoted heads, by receiving it on his own, and saves our lives by *making his soul an offering for our sin.* Finding a cup of heavy wrath and indignation prepared for us, he takes it out of our hands into his own, and drinks it off in our stead, that we might not have the least drop to our own share, but in lieu of it a cup of salvation for ever to entertain our selves with. Was ever love like Christ's, tried with such hard services as these, and fully answer'd the trial by an equal performance? Did any love but his pass thro' *such floods of tribulation, which yet could not quench or drown it?* To perceive and feel the force of which the better, we must all along keep in view the high character of him who did and suffered all these things, compared with the vile and despicable character of those for whose sake he underwent them: That he was no less a person than a God, one *who was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, who yet waved for a time,

Gal. iii. 13.

Zech. xiii. 7.

Isai. liii. 11.

Mat. xxvi. 42.

Sol. song, viii. 7.

Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

time, to ſerve whom? to ſerve his enemies that had rebelled againſt him, waved every appearance like a God, and put on a very ungodlike form: It was a God who *emptied himſelf* for us, in the firſt ſtep, by taking on him the real form and *faſhion of a man* (for even that was an infinite ſtoop to divine Majeſty, had it been from the firſt never ſo bright and glorious) in a ſecond by wearing this form in its meaneſt, pooreſt dreſs, the moſt ſervile miniſterial dreſs; in a third, by becoming in our nature a ſubject to the law we were under in the full force of its precept and penalty; and who being thus found in the faſhion, ſtate, and loweſt degree of a man, yet humbled himſelf more and more by repeated acts of abaſement in every kind, till at laſt *he became obedient unto death, even the* curſed, ſhameful and painful *death of the croſs.* Oh! what work was this for a God to perform for men, for ſinners, for enemies? What an unexampled, ſtupendous piece of ſervice this, which our Saviour's love has not refus'd us? before which all the ſervices we are apt to magnify ſo much of men of great and generous ſouls ſo call'd in our world, done for others in want and diſtreſs may ſurely well ſink into ſilence and obſcurity, as petty, trivial, worthleſs things, not fit to be ſpoken of, with, or after this. For what are they, of the few that

are

are real among the many that are airy compliments, but the sparing a little of their time which often lies waste on their hands, of their wealth, which is frequently more than they can use for themselves, or well know what to do with, of their interest and authority executed by the means of others, and which costs themselves little or nothing; sometimes it may be of their own labour, and at most the venturing their lives; and all this for those who are their fellow creatures, men like themselves, and who may hereafter, if they have not before, do some real service to themselves, as being equally liable to wants and calamities, whatever their present superior character may be? But oh! the vast disparity there is between every thing of this nature among men, and the manner wherein Christ has served our interests; who has given us himself, laid down his life, and shed his precious blood for us; and this when he was infinitely above us, and by reason of his absolute original blessedness and sufficiency could receive no real advantage from us, and in order to do us this service, was obliged to fall below himself by taking our nature, wherein alone he was capable of it? Nay, in this adventure he acted not only in a manner superior to creatures, but with superior grace and kindness to any other of the ways of

God: For all the rest witness only facts and deeds many and great indeed, which God, as our prime and greatest benefactor, does for us; but this exhibits the singular uncommon instance unheard of before, of a God suffering, bleeding, dying for us. This work then of our Saviour for us, is uncommonly divine, as well as infinitely more than human; a work which equally required the power and dignity of a God to accomplish and render it effectual, and the love and condescending grace of a God to undertake and persevere in it till it was finish'd. And how can it then but commend Christ to all the love of a Christian, when it does with such strange and unusual surprize commend his love to him; a love strong as death; a love which carried him, great as he was in himself, to condescend so low to us as to suffer and die for us, nay to court, to seek, to long for, to embrace suffering and death, with as great readiness and cheerfulness, as we can do life and happiness? There is no need of bringing any tragical passions and affections to the scenes of trouble and vast distress Christ pass'd through in our world for us. It is love, it is love, that tender and pleasing affection, which is first and chiefly under the conduct of faith to approach them; love to answer and meet his love, which reigns all over this

Rom. v. 8.

Luk. xii. 50.

Psal. xl. 8.

this field of blood, and is joined with victorious power, to make it produce nothing but the sweetest and most durable fruits for our comfort and happiness, fruits of the most costly expensive love. For the more he lessen'd his person, whether in the divine or human nature, lowering and obscuring the beauties and glories belonging to each; the higher he raised his love in the mean time, which appear'd in all its fulness and glory, while the other disappear'd as it were for a season, and seem'd to fade away. *His visage* being so *marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men*, as once it was, so that he was so far from appearing like a God, that he scarce look'd like a man; but rather as *a worm*, trampled on by all, *and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people*, the vilest and most despicable of mortals: What was it for? but that his love might shine forth the brighter through the dark shades that eclipsed the glory of his person, that he might present us with so much the fuller face of his love in the room of the retiring and contracted beauty of his person; and so that no view of him, no not in the lowest forms of meanness and distress, might want a suitable recommendation of him to our love, which here more especially is called forth to him in the most tender

Isai. lii. 14.

Psal. xxii. 7.

der and endeared exercises, from that motive of all others most powerfully and sweetly influencing it, his own love to us, expressing it self in the strangest and strongest manner possible. This is it that makes him *glorious* and beautiful *in his apparel, red* as it is, and dyed with blood, even his own blood, as well as the blood of his and our enemies, all of whom he slays in the virtue of his death. This is it that renders him amiable in his poverty (for *it was his own grace made him poor for our sakes, when he* was originally and in just right *rich* and Lord of all;) amiable in all the infirmities and necessities of our nature he endured; amiable in his stripes, whereby we are healed; amiable in reproaches and cruel mockings; amiable in the ensigns of mock-majesty he once wore, his purple robe, his reed sceptre, his crown of thorns; amiable in the scars of his buffeted face, and wounds of his pierced hands, feet and side; amiable in the racking pains his body felt all over when it hung distended on the cross, and in the more tormenting anguish and dolorous agonies his soul conflicted with, during the absence of his Father's love, and present sense of his wrath. Justly amiable and lovely is our blessed Lord, so as in nothing more so, view'd in this his suffering and dying estate, with all its circumstances of uncommon

Isai. lxiii. 1, 2, 3.

2 Cor. viii. 9.

uncommon aggravation; becauſe, whatever elſe it proclaims, as it does more than any thing elſe, the evil and demerit of ſin, the deſperate wickedneſs of ſinners, and the inflexible juſtice with the ſpotleſs holineſs of God, whereby our fear, ſorrow, and all reverential and penitential affections are addreſſed to; it proclaims loudeſt of all the love of Chriſt, condeſcending to our weakneſs and miſery in the moſt amazing inſtances of ſelf-abaſement, and providing for our ſalvation and happineſs at the greateſt expence to himſelf, denying us nothing, no, not his very blood, to make us happy; and ſubmitting to a temporary loſs of all good, and endurance of all evil, that this might turn to our unſpeakable gain, and eternal good; and hereby our love is immediately addreſſed to, invited to converſe with his dying love, and faſtened with cords never to be broken to his croſs, where it would look and look again, and every time it looks ſtill vents it ſelf a-new. How poſſibly can any human, eſpecially Chriſtian heart, on the report made of the love of Chriſt putting him upon, and carrying him through ſuch a ſeries of ſufferings, which he endured for us ſinful creatures, and entertained not as an idle tale, but a moſt certain ſolemn reality; contain it ſelf from overflowing with the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of gratitude, wonder and delight?

Ought

Ought not he in all reason to be beloved, who has thus loved unto death, whose love has streamed out in blood, and in the richest provisions for our soul's wants, procured by it? Or who must then be loved? And what allowed a reason for love? And how sweetly, as well as reasonably, may the Christian's love entertain it self at the cross of his Lord, which is a tree of life, blessedness, and all pleasant fruits to him, though it was a tree of death, cursing and bitterness to his Saviour? How may he gaze and look on it, and his Saviour nailed to it; and his love excited by the contemplation, have none but agreeable and ravishing prospects to please it self with, without any participation of the distress and bitter anguish Christ endured on it? For the cross of Christ being in it self the greatest proof and pledge of his love, and means of deriving its fruits to us, is, and ought to be the joy, crown, and glorying of every Christian, regarded not with a sad, heavy and fearful, but with a gladsom, chearful and joyful heart, at which he is to dry up every tear of heart-breaking grief, and vent none but tears of joy mixed only with those of sweet relenting sorrow mourning over sin; which will by no means marr, but friendly accord with his joy. How may he then sit down under the shadow of Christ's cross with great delight,

Gal. vi. 14.

Sol. song, ii. 3.

delight, with a rejoicing exulting love, and find all the fruits of it, being fruits of pure love, grace, favour, and happiness to him, inexpressibly sweet to his taste, and so much the sweeter, because prepared and matured by his Saviour's blood shed on it. For the trouble and pain our Lord suffered on the cross, is no allay to the triumphs and joys of the Christian's love, raised on this trophy of Christ's love, this dear instrument of his own happiness. It need not damp at all any of the pleasing affections due to the wonderful love of Christ expressed this way, and to the end with respect to our selves, which is all happy and joyful; by any corrections of sympathetic compassion and condoling sorrow, on Christ's own account, in regard to the bitterness of death he suffer'd on it. So indeed in other cases among our selves, we find the pleasing and uneasy passions intermixed in their operations; and the latter almost swallowing up the former, when we receive any good and advantage, by the means of another running great hazards, and suffering some great evil, especially the loss of his life, in procuring it for us. The horror and concern we conceive for our friend's sufferings in serving us so much to his own hurt, overpowers the satisfaction and comfort we might otherwise have in the ser-

vice done us, and causes us not to take any pleasure in the good however agreeable in it self to us, that comes to us in a way so injurious to another. Thus *David*, though he had longed vehemently for some water out of the well of *Bethlehem*, yet when it was brought to him at the jeopardy and expence of the lives of some of his mighty men of war, refus'd to drink of it because it was the price of blood. In such like cases as these then, our love which cannot indeed but be great to those that serve us at such expence to themselves, finds however ordinarily more work for our sorrows than our joys. And yet in regard to Christ's serving us by the greatest sufferings that ever were, the matter is otherwise; he excuses us now as he did the daughters of *Jerusalem*, even when he was going to be crucified, from weeping at all for himself; and would have our love to him all gratitude and joy for the good we reap from his evil, without any intervening grief for his sake, whatever may properly qualify it for our own. And wherefore this? Why; because his sufferings, however great above the measure of any besides, were all of his own voluntary choice and submitting to from pure love to his church, were all known beforehand to him, with the certain happy issue of them, were no more than what he

2 Sam. xxiii. 15, 16, 17.

Luk. xxiii. 28.

he was equal, nay ſuperior to, ſo that it was not poſſible for him to be ſwallow'd up or conſumed, no nor long exerciſed by them; and they are all now long ſince paſt and gone as to the ſmart he felt under them, though abiding in their virtue, uſe and excellent fruits; and ſo conſequently they all are accounted by and to him for trophies of honour, beauties, inſtead of blemiſhes, and higheſt matter of glory and triumph: Whence it is that he appears in heaven with the marks of his bleeding wounds, the Lamb as it had been ſlain in the midſt of the throne. And thus the ſhame and pain of his croſs is entirely alleviated, and it redounds to him for an enſign of renown and eternal glory, a perpetual memorial of his love, merit and victory, dear to ſaints and angels above; and no leſs precious to ſaints below.

It is his ſufferings alſo that found and lead on all the remaining works Chriſt performs for the ſervice of his people in heaven in his exalted ſtate, which are of a different nature from thoſe done on earth, being works of grandeur, power and authority, whereas the other were works of humiliation, but equally neceſſary for his people's good, and expreſſive of his love, ſtill purſuing its kind deſign, though in a new manner, for their happineſs and ſalvation. His love don't change with the

change of his ſtate, but is as warm at his heart as ever. The ſame love that made him endure a croſs here for his people's ſake, abides as firm in him as ever, now he has a crown on his head; and makes him uſe his honours and employ his high authority for their advantage. As his love was proved here by poverty and tribulations, it is now proved by a fulneſs of glory and power; and it anſwers to this proof as compleatly as it did to that. His love was then in labour and diſtreſs for us; now it is enthroned and triumphing yet ſtill for us alſo. Then it emptied himſelf; now it is filling us out of his immenſe and perfect fulneſs. Then it was more tender and melting; but now more dignifying and exalting; being placed in a more advantageous poſture for immediately executing its great and good deſigns for the welfare of his people, which it was before ſettling and preparing. Surprizing love indeed! that our Lord amidſt all the dignities and glories of ſo majeſtic a throne he ſits on in heaven, ſhould not forget us in all our ſinfulneſs, wants, meanneſs and miſery here on earth; not forget us, nay, he remembers us with all the ſame tender, endeared, concerned affection as he bore to us here while among us, and ſuffering what we had deſerved. He remembers us ſo, as to think himſelf in a manner incom-

pleat

pleat and imperfect without his church, as but half glorified till they come to be glorified together with him; for his people that are made his dear charge are to him his highest glory. He regards not his own glories, but in reference to his church, and as they may be made subservient to their interest and united glory; just as he overlooked his sufferings, as to his own concern, despising the shame and pain of them for their sakes. As he laid down one life for them on earth, he employs another for their use in heaven, there living to intercede for them in the virtue of that oblation he made of himself for them here below; there living to send down his Spirit as a spirit of wisdom and internal revelation to guide them into all truth necessary to be known for salvation; there living to reign in them by vital influences of grace descending from him really, though invisibly, into their hearts from time to time, and to reign for them by managing and ordering all events, which are under his controul, for their final advantage; and thus proceeding to execute and finish above, his threefold office of priest, prophet and king, which he happily begun below in order to the actual communication of all saving benefits and blessings to them. Heb. vii. 25.

Which brings us to the,

VI^th. and last particular, that requires and calls for the Christian's love to his Lord and Saviour; and that is the many valuable and important benefits he promises, and does and will communicate to all sincere believers in him. Christ not only does great things for his people, but he gives all good things to them. And the former prepares the way for the latter, his works for his largesses, and serve with his relation to the people, to give an inexpressible value and sweetness to his gifts, being wrought out at so much cost to himself, and being convey'd in so engaging a manner to them. In both respects, as being inseparable, Christ is the greatest and best benefactor that ever was, a benefactor by the highest services perform'd, and by the largest benefits bestow'd. He gives himself first, both to do all for them as their surety, and to become their head of glory and happiness; and then ever after he gives out to them a rich variety of blessings one after another as their state and case requires in this world, till he receives them at last into the other world where himself is, and pours out on them an endless profusion of heavenly blessings, which will make them as happy in and with himself, as their hearts can wish to be. Christians *have the Son*, and with him *they have life*, they have righteous-

1 Joh. v. 11, 12.

ness,

nesſ, pardon, peace, grace, glory, all things that can make them compleatly and eternally happy. It is Chriſt is the only medium of the ſpiritual and everlaſting felicity of them who are ſaved. All the true *Iſrael* of God in all ages *are ſaved in this Lord, with an everlaſting ſalvation*, and which is ſo ſure and full that *they ſhall not be aſhamed and confounded world without end. In him they have righteouſneſs; and in him ſtrength; in him they are juſtified, and in him glory.* It is he who is the receiver and diſpenſer of all the gifts for men that pertain to ſalvation; as he was only fit for this honour and truſt, becauſe he made the purchaſe of them. And oh! how vaſt are his ſtores? How large his capacity of doing good? For as there is not the ſmalleſt bleſſing, no not of a common temporal nature, but paſſes through his hands: So there is none of the biggeſt and ſweeteſt importance but he has in his power to impart. He is Lord of both worlds, and has the riches of each at his ſole diſpoſe; and truly inveſts his people with both, ſaving this earth to them which was doomed to deſtruction and a curſe, and aſſuring to them a convenient portion of its fruits with a bleſſing in it; and purchaſing heaven as a new acquiſition for them, which with all ſpiritual bleſſings leading to it he makes

Iſai. xlv. 17. *ver.* 24, 25. Pſal. lxviii. 18.

over to them, Oh! what a benefactor is Christ, infinitely superior to any other; having such a prodigious capacity of bestowing all suitable good on the children of men, such an exhaustless fund, out of which he can do for them and give to them, exceeding abundantly above what they can ask or think; and having withal an inclination and readiness of giving of his riches to those that come to him, every way equal to his ability? For he takes pleasure in communicating; more pleasure in giving than we can in receiving. What he gives, he gives heartily, as well as liberally, with an entire good will and complacency. His love flows out most freely and easily in his gifts, because in these it obtains the end and gratification it aimed at in the more difficult exercises of it, that went before to prepare these benefactions. And what can be a more satisfying evidence of this; than his making a tender of his benefits to men, proposing *his fruits to them as better than gold, and his revenue than fine silver*, on purpose to prevail on them to mind and seek after them, telling them *he would cause those that love him to inherit substance and fill their treasures*, and inviting them with all earnestness to accept of them?

Prov. viii. 19.

ver. 21.

And

And what then is not Chriſt moſt juſtly amiable as the greateſt, freeſt and moſt generous benefactor? Is not this reaſon enough why Chriſtians ſhould and can't but love him; love him with the higheſt ſtrains of gratitude for what they have enjoyed by him already, and with ſtrongeſt deſires of farther communion with him, for the enjoyment of the more and greater that is behind? If ever beneficiaries ſhould love their benefactors, (benefits received and expected, being univerſally allowed to be moving reaſons of love) how much more ſhould Chriſtians, their Lord and Saviour, from whom they receive and expect more and better than from any beſides?

And thus then we have gone over all the grounds of amiableneſs that are in Chriſt, conſider'd as to what he is in himſelf, what he is to God, and what he is to Chriſtians: from all which laid together, it appears ſo manifeſt that nothing can be more, that he both deſerves and provides for love in all its fulleſt and largeſt exerciſes; that he, if any, ought to be loved, and that with all the love our nature has. And let him then have it all. Let our love feed all its flames at this glorious ſun; and we endeavour to preſerve theſe flames always alive, and burning clear, ſtrong and bright.

LOVE

LOVE

TO AN

Unſeen Saviour.

1 PET. i. 8.

Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

SERM. II. preach'd *Octob.* 11. 1728.

IN the former diſcourſe on theſe words, the ſenſe of them was delivered in this propoſition, that

Doct. *Love to an unſeen Jeſus ſpringing from that faith in him, which ſerves inſtead of ſight, and tending when advanced to a due pitch, to a joy unſpeakable and full of glory, is a neceſſary eſſential part of Chriſtian temper.*

In conſidering which, after a brief confirmation of it, it was propos'd.

I. To

I. To give ſome account of the general nature of Love to Chriſt.

II. To take a view of Chriſt, the object of this love, and ſhew what are the particular grounds and reaſons in himſelf, for which he is, and ought to be loved.

III. To trace out the particular acts and expreſſions of a genuine love to him.

IV. To aſſign its properties and diſcriminating characters.

V. To ſhew the influence of faith in ſupply of the want of ſight, into the love of Chriſt, and its peculiar commendation from this circumſtance.

VI. To apply the whole.

Having already ſpoken to the two firſt of theſe heads, I proceed now,

III. To the particular acts and expreſſions of a genuine love to Chriſt.

The general acts or kinds of love which agree to Chriſt, in correſpondence with the diſtinct characters of his amiableneſs which they reſpectively moſt eminently ſuit, have been already taken notice

notice of; such as esteem complacency, benevolence, and gratitude, mixed of the former; all of which go together to the forming the habit of love to him. But then there are many other more particular expressions and fruits of this affection, belonging to one or other of its kinds, and accommodated to the different states wherein either the object or subject may be, according to which they vary and take place by turns, while the principle it self with the foremention'd radical acts that constitute it, remains the same in all states. Such instances of love will appear through all the powers and operations of the mind and soul, the whole train of passions with the whole course of external actions, over which love once seated in the heart will so preside as to exert and evidence itself by them all. And these now lie before us to consider; particularly such as agree to the circumstance mentioned in our text of want of sight and personal acquaintance with the object of our love; a circumstance under which love is so particularly submitted to trial, that it will hardly forbid any possible expression of it, has some peculiarly suited to it, and serves to recommend all.

To begin then,

In the 1st place, wherever love to Christ is found and prevails, it will certainly shew itself

itself in frequent thoughts, attended ever and anon with discourse of him. As all love begins first with the representation of its object to the mind, as amiable: So the affection abiding will keep the object on the mind and memory, and engage a person at every turn freely and voluntarily to bend his mind to the contemplation of it; and especially in a time of absence, so to solace himself with the remembrance of his friend when he cannot with his presence. Thus we shew our Love to human friends, when at a distance from us, nay and after death has parted them from us. How much more then must love to Christ, the best and most valuable of all friends, the chief of all beloveds, suggest the dear and frequent remembrance of him, while absent in heaven, to his friends on earth? Not seeing him now, being however soon to see him as he is: The more sure will they think on him, which is a mental beholding of him, in the mean time, the better to recompense their present want, and prepare them for the future enjoyment of the personal sight of him. The farther they are off from him in person, the nearer will they strive to bring him in spirit, by their intellectual views, till immediate intuition of him supersede, and swallow up in a manner all thoughts of ratiocination. When Christ

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is first seen in the light of faith, he appears such a wonderful and incomparably amiable object, that he does in a manner engross the mind, so as that with its good liking it would scarce think of any thing else. Let me alone, says the soul, now first enlightned with the saving knowledge of Christ, and inflam'd with his love, to the various surrounding objects of sense, that unavoidably in this world force themselves on it; "Let me alone "with my heavenly friend Jesus, that I "may at least converse with him, in my "meditations, whom barely thus to en- "joy is better to me than the actual en- "joyment of all other things. While I "leave to you, only my external senses, "and members, my common time, my "inferior powers, and my lighter thoughts: "My best of body and spirit, of strength "and time is my beloved Redeemer's. "The inner chambers of my most fix'd, "compos'd, and intent thoughts, as well "as supreme affections, I reserve and con- "secrate for the reception of this my di- "vine guest; and hither I charge you not "to come, to interrupt my retir'd com- "munion with him, of whom I can ne- "ver have enough, nor too little of other "things; on which, methinks, a single "thought, and a moment's time is too "much to bestow away from Christ, but

" out of pure necessity, and in hope of " being improved for him, and returning " me back to him with renew'd vigour and " sweetness. "

And as such as these are some of the first fruits of genuine love to Christ in a remarkable and very observable manner, about the time of conversion: So Christ being always the same, a perpetual source of ever new delights; accordingly, the thoughts of every true Christian will be still pursuing and tending toward him all his life long.

It is true, the love of most Christians in this as well as other respects, generally by length of time, and the power of worldly temptations, loses much of its first warmth and liveliness: And in reverse to their first experience, instead of feeling a sort of force and violence in being absented from him, by the necessary concerns of this life, through a contracted indifference to the things of Christ, they too often absent themselves, without any necessity, and against fair occasions and plain calls to converse with him; and find it as difficult and painful to fix their thoughts on Christ, as aforetime they did to have them diverted from him. Yet notwithstanding these disorders and declensions which at times seize the love of all Christians to their Saviour, while here; there

there is no Christian but is habitually inclin'd to give Christ the preference to all things else in his thoughts, as one certain way of shewing he does so in his afflictions: And recovering himself when he has for a time fallen into a neglect, he will resume him into his thoughts afresh, with a melting concern that he has forgotten him so long. *The heart* being once made *hot* with this fire of love *within it*, (a fire which once kindled will never wholly go out) will feel its gentle glowing heat, returning on it at seasons like *a burning fire shut up in the bones*, as will make a person *weary with forbearing* long to think or speak of the beloved object. The soul which loves Christ in truth, will not only at first, but ever after at times, be often ascending to him in the heavenly regions, on the wings of serious deliberate meditation; besides many transient flights.

Psa. xxxix. 3.

Jer. xx. 9.

And what thoughts are they which love to Christ will inspire?

They are thoughts of a noble elevation, and of a comprehensive reach; thoughts which dignify and exalt our understandings; the transcendent excellency and sublime dignity of the object, worthiest of the contemplation of our minds, reflecting a lustre on the faculty, that is honoured as much by conversing with it, as it is degraded by most other things that employ it; and

thoughts that thoroughly exercise and deeply engage the mind. It being the part of love to seek all the knowledge that can be had of the party beloved, and to think often over all that is known of him, even to the minutest particulars; though in the case of human love, that knowledge may soon be ended, and the thoughts are of a low stamp, of narrow and scanty dimensions, and supplied more from fancy than reason; surely then the love of Christ will awaken all the attention of the mind to this glorious and boundless object, and draw forth its thoughts toward it, to as full an extent as may be in some proportionable latitude to the vastness of the subject, which will always afford room for new growth, and further improvement of knowledge and acquaintance. The true Christian cannot but make his Lord his constant study, immerse his meditations as deep as possible into this theme, and be seeking *to comprehend with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, and to know* as far as can be known, *the love of Christ*, and whatever else of him may be known, though *surpassing* all intuitive and perfectly comprehensive *knowledge.* Ephes. iii. 17, 18, 19.

Further, *the thoughts influenced by the love of Christ, will be with regard to ourselves, and other things viewed in compa-*

riſon with Chriſt, humbling and diſdaining. Looking up to Chriſt, and ſtruck with his beauty and glory; we are ſent more feelingly into ourſelves, to reflect with ſo much the juſter ſentiments, and deeper ſelf-abaſement on our own native or contracted meanneſs and vileneſs, as being ſo miſerably unlike to him; and we are ſent abroad into the world with a fuller conviction of its vanity, and ſee that all its great and good things are flat and inſipid in reſpect to Chriſt and communion with him.

Again, *The thoughts about Chriſt which love to him prompts, are the moſt choſen favourite and pleaſing thoughts of any that can employ the mind.* The neceſſities of nature and calls of the animal life; the ſtations and offices aſſign'd us in this world for the ſupport of ourſelves, and the good of others; the infirmities of our minds themſelves, which in our preſent embodied ſtate, cannot bear a long and cloſe application to any, eſpecially abſtracted and ſpiritual objects; theſe things, of unavoidable neceſſity, together with others of ſinful infirmity, will not permit the thoughts of Chriſtians to be ſo frequently engaged on the whole with Chriſt, though they love him never ſo well, and infinitely more than every thing elſe, as they are with the concerns of this life. But then the

love

love of Christ, wherever it is, will certainly render those thoughts that are conversant about him, peculiarly grateful and agreeable above all the others. The soul that loves Christ will be never better pleas'd than when it can most freely and readily apply itself to think of him with enlarg'd meditations; when the thoughts of him rise up to the mind with ease and liberty, and flow in one on another without restraint, and without any considerable interruption from meaner objects. It never enjoys itself so much to its satisfaction, as at these seasons. It feeds and feasts on these thoughts, not in a fanciful manner as weak and vain minds do even on the most idle and impertinent trifles, the wild and chimerical projects of their fond imaginations, but in a solid and rational manner; as not only the love of the person tends to endear and ingratiate the thoughts of him, but as the things of Christ themselves, containing an infinite variety of the most excellent and useful matter, lay the justest foundation of thinking on them with superlative delight. Here the affectionate language of the holy Psalmist, expressing in high strains, his delightful relishes of the thoughts of his God, will be adapted. *My meditation of him shall be sweet. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; when* Psal. civ. 34. lxiii. 5, 6.

cxxxix. 17, 18. *I remember thee on my bed, and mediate on thee in the night-watchs. How precious also are thy thoughts to me, my God, my Saviour! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: When I awake, I am still with thee.* Thus precious and pleasant will the thoughts of Christ be, which are the offspring of love; not wanting often at happy seasons for a numerous plenty, and never for an incomparable sweetness. These are the thoughts most invited and sought to come; welcome when they are come; and preserved longest afterward, when others come and go without being much regarded, in the register of a faithful memory for future use, and reviewed often, and still with fresh pleasure! while worldly thoughts are entertain'd more loosely, and without any great emotion of soul, or would be so; while vain and sinful thoughts are absolutely rejected and reclaim'd against as lawless usurpers, and hated intruders: The thoughts of Christ have all the avenues of the soul thrown open to them, and are lodged within it and treated as kindred guests, that may come when they please without fearing a welcome, and the oftner so much the more welcome, because they bring along with them the noblest and best repast to the mind.

Finally,

Finally, *the thoughts that love to Christ inspires are affectionate thoughts and influential into the heart from whence they are minted.* They are warm thoughts as springing out of the very heart, and receiving a fervent heat from it, and they convey back to it a yet greater warmth; so repaying with usury what they have borrowed, causing *the fire* of love, *while we are musing to burn* yet more intensly: And thus an agreeable circulation passes between the thoughts of the mind excited and seasoned by love, and the affections of the heart more strongly moved by those thoughts. Not cold and curious speculations about Christ, merely for the obtaining such notions of truth concerning him, as may accomplish a mind ambitious of knowledge, and may tip the tongue with prompt and forward discourse, will content the sincere and fervent lover of Jesus; but his aim is to inlay into his mind such thoughts of him as may be deeply impressive, vigorous, and active; such thoughts as being awakened and animated by love, may further awaken, and animate it anew. The thoughts of the mind are, in a state of distance and separation, the principal channels wherein love flows: Most of the inward sensations that belong to, or wait on love, being exercised or expressed in and by them; as being not immediate but Psa. xxxix. 3.

reflected perceptions, and all of them, as has been observed, further improved and excited by, as well exciting them.

Here then we should naturally pass off from the thoughts to the desires, joys, and other sensations of love to Christ, which are thus mixed with them; but that it remains before we shut up this head to observe briefly how the thoughts excited by the love of Christ, are qualified from esteem and benevolence; of which the former has in a manner its sole exercise in the thoughts, and both of which we have reserved to apply to any of the instances of love, where they naturally fall in.

Our thoughts of love on Christ then are and certainly will be thoughts full of high esteem, advanced to vast, yet pleasing admiration. Tho' in the detail of Christ's amiables we match'd the glories of his person, most with esteem and admiration, as primarily and eminently adapted to raise them; yet these don't exhaust them, but other things in Christ, nay all of him, commands our wonder and esteem. For let him be surveyed on all sides, in his love and grace, in his offices and relations, in all his acts and manner of acting; there appears nothing from any that is low and common, nothing but what is both great and good, in an uncommon manner; no, nor will he ever appear otherwise. And thus

thus he furnishes out in the whole, and every view of him thoughts of wonder and thoughts of esteem mixed together, and that so as necessarily to yield the highest pleasure to the mind, while indulging them. Esteem is of itself a pleasing affection, and cannot be employed without immediate pleasure, its object being somewhat valuable and good in itself, or good to us; and here it is both in absolute perfection. Admiration regards in an object only its strangeness; and so may as well minister terror, and often does, when unusual objects are presented to us, as create pleasure. But here our admiration goes all over to the pleasing side; since excited by nothing but what is purely good and amiable; only good and amiable in an unmeasurable degree. Here then we cannot exercise esteem and complacency but it will quickly rise up to wonder and surprize: Nor can we give a vent to admiration, but it must needs please and delight. At the first view of Christ by faith is he not thus thought of? With what raised esteem! with what adoring wonder! with what profound veneration and respect! with what superlative valuation! And still he continues to be thought on with the same esteem and wonder, only raising higher instead of flagging, by further acquaintance, and especially by the hopeful

prospect and comfortable assurance of interest in him: For this makes all of Christ doubly marvellous in the eyes of the soul that he loves him, and draws forth the most elevated sentiments of rapturous transporting surprize. " *How great, Lord,* " *is thy goodness! how great thy beauty!* " how amazing is thy love, with all its " fruits, fruits of service, and suffering, " sweet to us, tho' bitter to thyself, and " fruits of endearing relations and enriching gifts! shall I not love and admire " thee, blessed Jesus, who hast such singular and all-commanding charms, and " especially as thou disdainest not to give " wretched worthless me a distinguishing " interest in thy person and grace? Shall " I not think on thee often with highest " respect and veneration? Shall I ever " grow weary of looking to, and conversing with thee by my affectionate " meditations? No, but thus will I converse with thee while I live, gazing and " looking on thee so long, so steadily, so " intently with that pleased silence and surprize; till I look myself out of this " prison house, which now detains me " from thy blissful face into thy immediate presence, where I shall see thee as " thou art, and yet knowing and loving " thee, and tasting thy love infinitely better than now I can; I shall however

" wonder

" wonder no less, but more, both at thy " peerless beauty and bottomless love."

Surely the Christian, as he cannot but often think of Christ, from the love and value he has for him, so cannot but think of him too at times in this elevation of spirit; for our thoughts of him would not be just and true, and suitable to what he is in himself, unless filled with admiring esteem; and he will so think of him sometimes in this exalted manner, as to be lost in his own thoughts, through the greatness and surprizing nature of the subject, overwhelming a weak and finite mind; which will oblige him at the same time his love calls them yet further on, of necessity to sound a retreat, and give respite to them as unequal to the subject that employs them, and not capable of further attention to it at once.

And the thoughts of love to Christ will be no less of a benevolential and grateful cast, than they will be esteeming and admiring thoughts. They will often suggest what expectations Christ may have from Christians here, in what methods of service they may approve their love to him, by promoting his interest, and be forming and fixing schemes in relation hereto. " Think, O my soul, says the " Christian often to himself, what thou " canst do for thy Saviour, to whom " thou

" thou owest so much. What shall I " render to him, what returns can I " make him for his love and all his be- " nefits? What is that work of my day " and generation, of my place and station, " that becomes me to do, for the honour " and service of my great and beloved " Master and Redemeer? Contrive the " best measures thou canst for accomplish- " ing it; and my will resolves by his grace " whereon I depend, vigorously to set " about it, and endeavour the performance " of it."

And such as these then are the thoughts in relation to Christ, which love to him inspires the mind with; to which there will not be wanting on proper occasions, and with due allowances for difference of natural tempers, as the next remove from the mind and heart, suitable, warm, and affectionate Discourses concerning the glorious person whom the soul loves; which as dictated by love will be a means of farther inflaming it. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth*, will here as in other cases, *speak*. If Christ possess the heart, must he not dwell sometimes on the lip? It is the part of Christians to talk of the glory of their Lord's kingdom; as they love and think on his name so to speak often one to another about it, and to spread it abroad with honour and praise;

Psalm cxlv. 6, 7, 8 Mal. iii. 16.

with

with high-sounding encomiums, expressing their supreme value of Christ, and out of desire of having him known, enjoy'd, and loved by all, to recommend him both to strangers and friends, saying, *This is our beloved; This is our friend; the chief of ten thousands, and one altogether lovely.* The too general want and neglect of serious, humble, and pathetic discourse among Christians, concerning Christ and other spiritual subjects, in our day, both argues divine and Christian love to run low, and serves to keep it low. Sol. Song. v. 10, 16.

II. Love to Christ will express itself in desires toward him accompanied with suitable endeavours; and these of two sorts; such as respect ourselves immediately, or Christ for ourselves, and such as respect him for himself. Both these sorts of desires essentially belong to genuine love to Christ; since they are necessary and natural expressions of that double esteem which jointly forms the just and primary idea of all love to a rational object that lays a foundation for it, esteem of it, as good to us, and worthy of good for himself, as here the fullest provision that can be, is made for both.

First, then true love to Christ will express itself in desires after him for our own sakes; that we may have the nearest

union and fullest communion with him, that we possibly can have both here and hereafter; desires intense and supreme, active and industrious, constant and permanent, impatient and unsatisfied; desires in correspondence to the natural appetites whereby spiritual desires are often represented in scripture, proportionable to the sence of the importance Christ is of to the supply of the wants, and perfecting the happiness of an immortal but fallen soul, which is far more than that of food to the wants of animal nature, or the pleasure of sensual gratifications. True love will constantly put forth warm and sprightly desires after its object when absent, or not so fully enjoy'd as it may be, in order to its being present, and enjoy'd in the perfectest manner possible. So human love always is known to operate between friends divided asunder from each other by place, or not permitted as free and full a correspondence as love demands. And thus the love of Christ to his Church is not without its desires of communion with her, desires suited to his Majesty, and expressive of wondrous condescention, not for any good to be received from her (for *her goodness can never so extend to him* who has no wants to supply from her enjoyment) but that he may please himself with the fruits of his own Grace, already brought

Psal. xlv. 11. Sol. Song ii 14. chap. vii. 10.

brought forth, and ſtill impart more to her as ſhe is in a fit temper to receive it. So then neither will the Chriſtian's love to his ſaviour be wanting in theſe its genuine emanations and fruits of warm and lively deſires after him as long as he is at all abſent, and not fully enjoy'd, who is the very light and life of his ſoul, and on whom his all depends.

The firſt exertion of the love of deſire towards Chriſt, and which breaks forth immediately on the principle being infus'd into the ſoul, is with a view to the obtaining a real and ſaving intereſt in the Lord Jeſus, regarded not merely as indiſpenſably neceſſary to eſcape damnation, which fear prompts to, but as an admirable expedient for life and ſalvation, in which view of it alone, love properly takes place; though ordinarily fear and love together wing the firſt motions of the ſoul toward Chriſt, and more of the former than the latter, prevails in them for a time; whence it is that they are peculiarly diſquieting and tormenting like thirſt, excited by ſcorching heat. Now then it is, when not only ſin is felt, and hell is feared, but Chriſt is both ſeen and approved in the fulneſs of his mediatorial ſaving Character; that the ſoul longs with ſupreme, and inexpreſſible ardor of deſire to be found in him, and to have him all

to itself; he is ordained of God to be to his church in the quality of Mediator and Saviour; as *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* Now nothing appears any thing near so desirable to the soul as an interest in Christ; it esteems this worth more than all the world, nay than millions of worlds; and reaches forth toward it with mighty contention of spirit, and all its active powers, willing to obtain it on any terms, and diligently using all appointed means for this end. Now the most remote thought, and distant fear of falling short of Christ wounds the heart to the quick, as a thousand times worse than death in any of its most dreadful forms. Now its incessant and importunate cries are, "Give me Christ or I die: "Oh! none but Christ, none but Christ! "Let who will possess the world for me; "may I but win Christ, whatever else I "lose and go without, I am content; "and then, and not till then, shall I be "happy. O! infinitely, eternally, and "only happy they, who are his, and "he is theirs!" Such are the first kindlings of desire; such the vehement aspirations after an interest in Christ, in a soul that is forming for him, and he in it; and hereby Christ comes actually to dwell in it, and love to him takes root in the soul.

1 Cor. i. 30.

Now

Now on this foundation laid of holy desires first turned to actual relation to Christ, as first wanted, and leading on all other blessings, that flow from him, to which point they continue to be directed as long as it hangs in suspense, which it often does a great while after it is really obtained: The lover of Jesus having gained this great point, tho' exceeding thankful, can by no means rest satisfied here; but on these first desires fulfill'd, builds other desires continually, whereby he is still following hard after Christ, to gain a yet nearer and stricter alliance to him, and more full and sensible communion with him in all the remaining blessings that are with him to give. For he regards him not merely as a Redeemer, to save him from hell and misery, and to secure him any how happy; but as a friend with whom he may sweetly converse, and as the perpetual medium of his felicity, and as his portion for ever. Whatever hope then he has in Christ, or taste of his Grace, far from damping, will whet the appetite more, setting and keeping this double edge on it, of a steady habitual inclination to his immediate presence in heaven; and in the mean time, as a supply and preparation for that, to his spiritual presence on earth, promised in his word, and ordinances; to communion with, and all communications of grace from

from him to the utmost degree, wherein they can be had here; which however defective in comparison of what is reserved in heaven, is esteemed, and will be sought after as the flower and perfection of all that earth affords. The faithful and constant lover of Jesus would ever have his Saviour near to him, and be himself ever near his Saviour; for which end he conscientiously attends his walks in the galleries of his house, and dare not neglect any of the means of intimacy and communion with him. With that tried and proved friend of Christ the apostle *Paul*, who readily suffered the loss of all things for him; he presses on to know and win Christ more and more, hardly reckoning any thing of his first gain while there is more remaining to be won of him. He eagerly pants for Christ, more especially when remarkably withdrawn, and is not easy till he recovers him, and is restored to his favour and smiles: On the other hand, when he has found and enjoy'd him for some time, he wants and wishes to keep him as long as he can; *he holds him fast*, and *will not let him go*; One while he craves and sighs after his quickening influences to animate and rekindle his very desires with other spiritual graces, when they are perceived to languish; dreading nothing so much as an insen-

Phil. iii. 8. 9.

Sol. Song iii. 4.

insensibility to Christ and divine things, that so he may spring up with renew'd vigor into the embraces of his beloved, and have new life added to all his endeavours of serving him. Another while his longing eye is toward the views of his glory, the comforts of his love, and the obtaining more full and satisfying evidences of his being in Christ. At other times he is aiming and striving to have his knowledge and enjoyment of Christ work in him a nearer assimilation to him in all his imitable excellencies; that so *beholding as in a glass the glory of his Lord, he may be changed into his very image from glory to glory.* For it is of the nature of love to work more and more of a likeness between friends, as it generally finds one in part. And here then, tho' there be no similitude at first between Christ and his people, but he finds them the reverse of his amiable image; yet as love to him begins, so it will carry on a growing conformity to him who is the only party in this mutual love of friendship, to stamp the likeness, because only worthy.

2 Cor. iii. 18.

And finally, since the neareſt approximation, the fullest resemblance, and the most perfect communion with Christ is to be attained only in his heavenly presence and kingdom: Therefore the Christian cannot but love and earnestly look *for his Lord's* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Tit. ii. 13. John xvii. 21, 24, 26.

ance, and reach out his desires ultimately after the beatifical vision and fruition of him in heaven, which will fill and end them at once. So far as the weakness of faith will permit it; so far as there are clear evidences of an interest in Christ; and so far as the natural love of life and fear of death, which stick very close to us, while united to flesh, can in any good measure be over-ruled and conquered: That love which in every true Christian has a radical inclination to immediate access to Christ (so that he would not on any terms abide always here at a distance from his Lord) this love, will put itself forth in actual desires after a *being with Christ as far better* than the best either of other things, or even of Christ in this world; such desires as will cause the present distance at times to be a pain at heart to the Christian; such desires as will gradually sink those very fears of death, which most oppose them and make the soul groan under the body, as a dead weight that keeps it down from ascending whither it would, and which therefore it wants to shake off; in a word, such desires which nothing else will come into competition with, but desires of benevolence to Christ, and his interest in the world; between which two sets of desires lies that blessed strait, which as the

Phil. i. 23.

2 Cor. v. 2, 4.

holy

holy apostle was, so every Christian should choose to be in, as composing the best frame of soul on this side heaven. And this brings us, Phil. i. 23, 24.

Secondly, to say somewhat of those desires of love to Christ, which are for himself. Though our Lord have left this earth in person: yet he has not done with all manner of concern about the affairs of it: No, he has a cause depending here, that greatly relates to his honour and glory; an interest which he reckons peculiarly as his own; and which of itself from its excellency and entire tendency to the benefit of mankind in general, and his people in particular, deserves the chief regard of all Christians. For what is this interest of Christ, but the furtherance of the salvation and happiness of men, by the knowledge of himself, and their becoming obedient constant subjects to his mild and righteous sceptre? This his interest, and the affairs of his kingdom here below, our Lord being gone into the heavenly country, where he is so highly exalted, and completely happy as gives no room for any good wishes or good offices to be used toward him in his own person, recommends to all his faithful subjects and friends, as the only instance wherein they may express their benevolent desires to him, and should do it as much as if they could to his person as

what will be accepted in like manner. This proof of love he proposed no less than three times to *Peter*, when being as often questioned about it, he with a solemn appeal to himself every time avow'd his love to him; *Feed then*, says he, *my sheep*; *feed my lambs;* plainly intimating hereby his just expectation, that not only *Peter*, but every one that has a real affection to him should shew it by a studious and active concern for his interest in his church, and in the world, each one in proportion to his sphere, capacity, and opportunity. And how can it possibly be otherwise, but that true love to Christ will so unite and knit the soul with Christ, as to make a person affected to his interest as to his own (this being but the natural and common operation of love in cases like this, of the absence of a friend intrusting his concerns, left behind him, with his friends on the spot) nay, and to prefer it to that of all others, and his own private good, when standing in competition with it, by how much Christ is worthier and better than all, and has deserv'd the utmost Christians can dô for him and his cause by far superior services done for them? In pursuance of this affection, as a first and main branch and effect thereof, true fidelity and loyal allegiance to his Lord will be maintain'd with all care by the Chri-

John xxi. 15---17.

Chriſtian in his own perſon, to the end he may never give occaſion for his great Lord and Maſter to be ill treated, or evil ſpoken of through his means, but on the contrary, by his example invite others to love and ſerve him. Will he not alſo ſtand up with an holy undaunted zeal in the face of all oppoſition and dangers of every ſort, in defence of the glory and dignity of his perſon, and in ſupport of all his characters, truths, worſhip, and ways, whenever they are any of them denied, and ſpoken or acted againſt, accounting them dearer to him than reputation, riches, friends, and life itſelf? Will he not then wiſh well to the mount *Zion*, which he loveth, attend this mighty warrior riding on his white horſe of the Goſpel, conquering and to conquer, with loud hoſannahs, and copy out thoſe hearty wiſhes and prayers of ſucceſs and proſperity to him, which are ſet down as genuine expreſſions of benevolential love by the Pſalmiſt when *his tongue was the pen of a ready writer*, to ſing the praiſes of this glorious King. *Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt Mighty, with thy Glory and thy Majeſty. And in thy Majeſty ride proſperiouſly on the word of truth, and meekneſs, and righteouſneſs!* And will he not vouch too theſe good wiſhes and deſires, with endeavours tending as far as in him lies

Pſal. xiv. 3, 4.

lies to give them their desired effect; engaging and listing all his faculties and powers in his service, and yielding up to him all his graces, gifts, parts, time, substance, tongue, hands, feet, endowments, and talents of every sort, in order to promote his valuable and precious cause and interest; at the same time feeling an uneasy emotion and inward trouble, when the contrary to any of these wished and aim'd at events appear?

And so much then may suffice for the second expression of love to Christ, in the strong and lively desires of the heart accompanied with proper endeavours after both the enjoyment of him, and the promotion of his interest in the world. From which we pass next,

III. To the joys and delights of love terminating on Christ, with their concomitant symptoms and effects.

And of these there is exactly the same reason, with desire, on the part of the object, the difference lying only on the part of the subject and its relation to the object. What unattained excites desire, will so far as attained in whole or in part, in actual possession, or in hope, necessarily produce joy; which is a pleasing sensation or reflection on our having it in our power to enjoy any good, or hoping so

to have it; which joy will be proportionable to the degrees of our present enjoyment, and hope for the future; and will be farther increased over and above the pleasure yielded from the object itself, by the additional gratification of antecedent desires. Joy then is required in our present love to Christ to alternate and co-operate with desire; this being alway the case whenever the object as here, comes to be enjoy'd in part, but not fully, and yet its full enjoyment hereafter may become matter of present hope. It is the interest and wisdom of Christians to ballance these rightly together; not suffering the restless vigor of desire to extinguish joy, by taking absolute possession of the soul, but rather to lay in provision for it, while its successive stages and shorter marks, in its progressive motion to its utmost ultimate end, as often as reach'd, together with the hope of that end, are properly improvable to joy; nor yet suffering the sedate and calm rest of joy to put a stop to the tendencies of further desires toward Christ, but rather to quicken them till our desires of love being all satisfy'd, change wholly into pure joys of love in heaven. Thus should it be the aim of the Christian to let his desires and joys while here go hand in hand, and to carry both,

since alike proper expressions of his love, as far as possible to equal heights; desiring with such vehemency for more of Christ, as if he had found nothing already to rejoice in; and so rejoicing in what he has found, and what more he certainly hopes for and expects, as if he had nothing left to desire. So the love these Christians in our text bore to their unseen Saviour, not only had joy wrought into it, but flowered out into joy high and rapturous; *Joy unspeakable and full of glory.* And the same principle for kind does equally belong, (though attained by few in equal degrees) to the character and duty of all that truly love Christ, as is easily collected from the nature of love requiring, scripture examples, characters, and precepts, recommending, and gospel-provisions making way for it; and the highest most explicit exercise of it should be aim'd at.

Now this joy in Christ, which is a noble fruit of love, is in the same manner as desire, to which it corresponds twofold.

First, There is a joy of love in Christ, which respects him for himself; a benevolent pleasure and satisfaction, which rests in his glory, happiness, and prosperous interest. Which I would first take a view of, inverting the order wherein the desires of love were considered; that so the

the whole of the benevolent temper toward Christ, as essential as any thing to the love of him, may be represented more in one view. And this benevolential joy may be considered,

1.) With reference to Christ's own proper person and personal glory and felicity. When our Lord was going out of the world, like a generous friend who resents the selfish spirit of his friend, that is for drawing the relation which ought to be reciprocal, all to his own side; yet by gentle insinuation still, as an indulgent, superior friend, he taxes his disciples with want of due love to him in suffering their sorrow for their own loss by his departure, to over-rule all their joy for his gain by it; thus claiming the friend from them in his turn, as he had acted the friend to them all along, and did so too in this very instance, wherein he again and again assures them their best interest as much as his own, was consulted. *If ye loved me,* says he, that is, with a pure disinterested love for my sake, as well as a wise and understanding, not fond affection for your own, *ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I;* "in going to whom "therefore as my supreme, all-sufficient "rewarder, and reward, on finishing the "work he gave me to do, I go from la- Joh. xiv. 28.

"bour

" bour to rest, from trouble to peace, " from pain to pleasure, from sorrow to " joy, from ignominy and reproach to " dignity and honour, from a cross to a " crown, from poverty and want of all " things worthy my self, to a fulness " both of glory and blessedness, and also " of power and capacity to serve my " people on earth beyond what I could " by staying there. If the disciples then were to have expressed their love to Christ in rejoycing in the near prospect of his going to his Father, and so being received up to glory: by parity of reason, it must be an expected fruit of our love to Christ to rejoice in his being now already arrived in heaven, and there crowned with glory and honour: And here our love demands nothing but joy, joy full, pure and entire, joy constant and open for us to indulge when we please, without any thing to fear or desire, for our Lord in this behalf, whose personal glory and felicity is now consummated, as perfect as it can possibly be, and liable to no future change. When there is nothing then left us to wish of good and glory to our dear Redeemer in his own person, to shew our hearty good-will to him that way; the easier and pleasanter part remains, which we must so much the rather perform, to have a complacential relish of what he has

has and ever will retain, congratulating with him, that he who deserves it so well is so highly raised above all our thoughts, and above the power of our willing him any thing greater or better. Is he now entered into his joy, and rest, and glory, the greatest that can be, after his sufferings and sorrows, the greatest too that could be, and as a meet recompence for the same? Love will teach us to make that his joy our joy; to follow him to his royal seat with our loudest acclamations, *singing praises with understanding*, and a willing mind *to our King, our God, who is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet*, and often to hail him on the throne, with language of greater extent, and of better import than was once used in detestable mockery to him, " Hail, King, not of the Jews on- " ly, but of all nations, as well as by pe- " culiar title, King of Saints. With angels and archangels shall we then frequently join in those ascriptions of all glory and honour to him, which echo quite through heaven, and bespeak the warmest raptures of love: *Worthy*, for ever worthy, *is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.* If we love him, we shall sure often remember and celebrate with all the

Psa. xlvii. 5, 6.

Rev. v. 12.

the tokens of spiritual joy and mirth his coronation-day, just as we are wont to do, by kings we value here below; that day on which, with myriads of the heavenly hosts in his retinue, he entered with solemn triumph into heaven, and took his place at the right hand of the Majesty on high; we shall love to repeat as far as we can, the solemnities of that bright and memorable day, and by the hand of love put our selves as it were a crown on his head, by expressing our abundant satisfaction, that the crown he wears in heaven shines with such distinguish'd lustre, and stands so firm on his head. None of the honours heaped on Christ appear too many or great for him by those that truly love him. They don't envy him any of them, are not uneasy at them, much less go about to spoil him of any part thereof; they are not even indifferent to them. No! but they resent them all, with the over-flowings of the most agreeable satisfaction, rejoicing in his having them rather than any other, as being most worthy, not without pleasing wonder, that he can sustain so many various characters of dignity and glory at once with perfect harmony. So his human beauties and glories of body and mind, wherein he has the pre-eminence of the whole material and immaterial creation;

and

and all those superior relishes, he, as the man brought nearest to God, has of the river of God's pleasure and love: So all the high dignities and honours, present and future, of his mediatorial office, freed as it now is from all that toil and painful trouble which went into the execution of it on earth, and wholly employ'd in an honourable and glorious manner: So his absolute, original, supreme blessedness, and divine glory which he has had from all eternity, *that glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world;* and which being now completely rescued from all the obscuring shades that eclipsed it in our world, shines forth in heaven, confessed in its truth, perfection, and full lustre: This, with his other glories and felicities as man and mediator, do all gratify and gladden his true friends, and give them real and ravishing joy at heart; and this above all, as what they ultimately acquiesce in. O! they greatly rejoice and are pleased in an uncommon manner, that their head and Saviour is, and ever has been in himself so glorious a person; they triumph in his divine essential glory, as supporting and animating all his other characters, offices, acts and prerogatives, so as to render them at once comely and graceful to himself, and effectual to the salvation of his

people. In all these articles of the Redeemer's personal felicity and glory; and in all the consequential devout affections and ascriptions of praise to him, which they claim, and actually gain for him, from all in heaven, without one disagreeing voice, and from all who are savingly acquainted with him on earth; do such as love Christ take inexpressible satisfaction and delight, while absolutely contemplated; and in the comparative view of them also, they give them a very sensible support and refreshment, as set against either the antecedent meanness and sufferings of Christ's humbled state, or the present attempts and designs carried on in our world by the devil, and wicked men his instruments, to degrade and vilify our blessed Saviour, or even their own present troubles and afflictions, which may well be assuaged and lessened by reflecting on the perfect happiness of him whom they love as their own soul, especially as it is a security and pledge of their own in due time. When the lover of Jesus thinks, and cannot but think with raised gratitude, how his Lord in the days of his flesh condescended to *drink of the brook in the way*, the brook of manifold tribulations, and that for his sake; it will be a wonderfully pleasing relief to the mind under the tender impressions such

views

views of Christ cannot but give, to think at the same time, that having once drank of it, he will drink of it no more for ever, but has *lifted up the head,* and most worthily now has the fullest cup of salvation and glory to his own share for ever to drink of. And again, when one that loves Christ with sincere and pure affection, casts his eyes abroad in the world and sees how Christ is trampled on in his interests here below, his person denied, his name little known and regarded, nay, treated often with profaneness and contempt; his gospel, with all the sacred truths relating to him disbelieved, perverted, or received with indifference, his authority slighted and affronted, and his very grace rejected or abused; his love to his Lord which makes him grieve and mourn at this sight, will obtain a comfortable diversion, and cut to it self a channel of joy and pleasure to run in, by only changing the scene from earth to heaven; for so all things in regard to Christ appear with another and better face, just as they ought, and he is treated with marks of universal honour and respect there; whatever are the low and despairing sentiments and behaviour of ungrateful men toward him here in this sinful world. Psal. cx. 7.

To

To all this congratulatory joy of the ſoul that loves Chriſt in his perſon and perſonal glory, will be farther added,

2.) A joyful complacency in his intereſt ſo far as obtaining in the world, and in all the incouraging views and proſpects of its ſucceſs. Oh! it will be infinitely agreeable and delightful to the lover and friend of Jeſus, to think that though his kingdom at preſent makes ſuch ſmall and ſlow advances in the world, yet a perpetuity of continuance, and an increaſe of glory is certainly intailed on it till it arrive at a ſettled eſtate of both ſpiritual and temporal proſperity, wherein as well as in extent it ſhall far ſurpaſs every other intereſt. In the ſure, however diſtant proſpect of this great and glorious event, raiſed by the numerous repreſentations of it in the ſcriptures of truth, which not only certainly and expreſsly foretell it, but give ſuch graphical deſcriptions of it, as to ſet its beautiful and pleaſing image, even now as it were before our eyes; the hearts of true Chriſtians will at times leap and exult within them for joy; and in the mean time, though for the preſent their love make more demands on their tears, ſorrows, and deſires, than their joys, with a view to the Redeemer's intereſt, becauſe of the prevailing declenſions that befal it, as loſing rather than gaining ground in the world

world; yet it will be exceeding grateful to them, and affect them with divine pleasure, to see or hear of a few souls, now and then one converted to Christ; and they cannot but rejoice in the smallest appearing revivals of his interest in particular places and churches. And as to themselves, and the work of salvation going on in their own souls, though they cannot but be pleased with the happy progress of it for their own sakes, and love and rejoice in their own felicity with the means to it; yet they will be led from the pure affection they bear to their God and Saviour, to rejoice in it, not as an absolute and ultimate end, but rather as a subordinate end, a means to his honour and glory.

But this brings us,

Secondly, To say something of the joys of love fixing on Christ immediately for ourselves, as our greatest and best good, an object of complete delight and satisfaction to our souls. Which private joys stand inseparably connected, without any interfering, with the joys we have been considering, that respect Christ purely in himself. They mix together, and have a reciprocal influence into one another. Christ himself, as well as his benefits, is a most proper object of the Christian's joy of love, because his benefits are not given

apart from, but in and with himself, by virtue of a real and strict relation that passes between Christ and him. And, oh! how many are the sweet springs of joy in Christ to supply and satisfy the Christian? For there is nothing on the part of Christ, and relation to him, either as a means or an end (for he is both together) but what is adapted to feed joy. The laying open the springs of life and happiness that are in Christ, in the Gospel, may awaken a more general and distant joy and gratitude in all. The nearer view of them by faith, and access to them for ourselves by a love of esteem and desire, contains and cannot but carry in it a particular habitual joy, a fixed and settled judgment and resolution to seek and expect our chief joy from hence. And the actual taste of them, and hope of being ever supplied from them, superadded to the former, must needs produce actual joy, and that exceeding great. Considering the fulness and extent of the relation Christ stands in to Christians, as comprehending all blessings temporal, spiritual, and eternal, (since *Christ* being *theirs all things are theirs*); considering its peculiar inexpressible sweetness in itself, and its immediate proper fruits; considering the engaging and honourable order wherein it becomes operative and effectual to the salva-

1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

salvation of Christians, by first interesting them in the merits and righteousness of their Saviour; considering the wonderful free exhibition of Christ with his benefits in the promises, and invitations of the Gospel, which do as it were put them into the possession and full power of those that believe; considering the sure continuance of this relation, as being indissoluble, and to remain for ever; and considering it lastly, as looking backward as well as forward, far back, not only through the Christian's own time, wherein many past sweet fruits of it may occur to the thoughts, not only through the time of his Lord's life in this world, or life in heaven, which all goes into it, since he was given for us, to be born, to live, to die, to rise again for us; but reaching up to the ages of eternity, in the designation and preparation of it; Christ being given to his people (as they to him), from eternity, an ancient gift and provision for their souls, and so the more valuable, *the Lamb of God, fore-ordained for them before the foundation of the world;* how can the Christian, being one that believes all this concerning Christ, and his relation to his people, and has accordingly fixed his choice and love of highest esteem and desire on Christ; but lay out his superlative joy to arise out of the possession and en-

joyment of him? How can he but do this at any time, and how can he but feel and indulge actual joy at an uncommon rate, on the comfortable persuasion he at any time has, of himself being a real partaker of Christ Jesus? And this joy of love in Christ will have several noble and glorious expressions and effects, inward and outward. It will cause those that experience it within them; to bless and congratulate themselves for their fixed and high-raised state of happiness in Christ; and to bless and applaud all that are fellow-sharers with them in Christ. It will settle a sedate chearful frame in the soul, and render the mind contented and satisfied in all circumstances of life; moderating and heightening together, those that are easy and comfortable; and so far overbalancing the reverse, by the infinitely greater weight of good there is in Christ, above the small and next to no proportion of evil any of them contain, and securing them withall to answer a good end and use, that by virtue of this joy of Christ transferr'd over to them, they may become themselves matter of rejoicing and glorying, as to the primitive Christians on this foot they were. Thus will this joy, as supreme, overcome and subdue to itself all other, both joys and sorrows. It will further fix deep in the heart the law of gra-

Rom. v. 3.

titude towards Christ and God, and the law of kindness towards men. While it will excite a noble scorn, for the person himself, of all the glittering vanities, and tempting enjoyments of this world, as not worthy to be mentioned with the inestimable portion he has in Christ, and being too inconsiderable baits to allure the heart away from Christ, (the very thought of which is abhorred); at the same time, it will move pity and compassion toward all such who turn their backs on Christ for the love of this present world, as persons that however they may swell in a fond conceit of their own wisdom, greatness and felicity, do sadly impose on themselves; and it will also oblige to an affable, kind, humble, benign, and beneficent demeanor to all men. On the other hand, it will fill the soul with grateful resentments of the honour and grace conferred on it, in being called into union and communion with the Son of God; it will open the mouth wide in abundant thanksgivings and praises to Christ and to God, even the Father, for Christ; and it will stir up a person to all the real returns of gratitude it is capable of, in serving and promoting the Redeemer's interest. And finally, it will engage a person, to be often making his humble boasts of Christ to others as well as within himself;

self; causing him not to be ashamed or afraid, but resolute and ready, though in meekness and fear, to confess Christ before men, as his sole hope and confidence, and to recommend him to their choice, being in no danger of diminishing his own part in him by the communication of him among many; since he is a portion sufficient for all *.

Having now at large drawn out the nearest and most immediate acts of love, which terminate on Christ the object directly, namely, frequent thoughts of him, desires toward him, and joys in him, with their several ways of manifesting themselves; I now proceed to other expressions which are rather effects than formal acts of this affection, yet close and certain effects, without which love can never be in our present state, and as real indications as fit and proper marks of its truth as any of the former, being either other operations of the soul about Christ inseparably mixt with love, or these together with love exercised on itself, or other things for Christ's sake. Of which sort is,

IV. A valuable esteem, and respectful regard for whatsoever peculiarly belongs

* Here may be a proper pause, dividing this Sermon into two parts.

to

to Christ. If there be any remembrances or memorials of Christ; any letters or messages from him; any of his special friends, or whatever he is known to value; any tokens and pledges of his love, or any proper means and occasions for assisting and evidencing his people's love to him; these as many of them as are found in our world since Christ has left it, must according to the known law of friendship be valued and suitably used by all his true friends, as furnishing out the usual reliefs and proofs of love in time of absence.

Thus, for instance, love to Christ will manifest itself by paying a tender, affectionate, and dutiful regard to the Spirit of Christ, that spirit which is his in so peculiar a manner, and is to supply his room, to act in and with us in his name, *to glorify him in our souls, taking of his things and shewing them to us;* and to train us up by his gracious internal operations for a meetness in due time to be with him. We shall then loving Christ, love his Spirit too, under this his special character of Christ's great Agent in the world, and in our hearts, as well as because he merits from us divine love, and a loyal subjection for himself, as he performs by his own power divine works on us; we shall then take great care that we do not quench, resist, or grieve him, by a neglect of, or opposition

Joh. xvi. 14.

sition to any of his holy and seasonable motions within us; but on the contrary, resent with gratitude his kind condescention, in thus taking the management of our weak and disorderly spirits, and our Saviour's concern for us in providing us with such an inward constant monitor; and we shall cherish and comply with his suggestions and impressions all we can, and with great observance and devout submission yield up ourselves to him; just in the same manner as loving and faithful subjects express their loyalty and affection to their sovereign, when absent out of his dominions, by behaving with respect and duty to those he leaves regent in his stead.

Thus again, if we love our dearest Lord, now he is absent from us; we shall have an hearty esteem and especial love for all the members of his mystical body, nor be wanting in such offices of love to them which our mutual circumstances require and give opportunity for. For they are all of them his friends and favourites, the only ones he has in our world; they are his relations in a spiritual sense, his brethren, his children; so that if we do indeed *love him that begot, we cannot but love those that are begotten of him.* They are also to be considered as the living images and epistles of Christ Jesus, having

1 John v. 1.

2 Cor. iii. 3.

having his likeness stamped on them. Other pictures and representations of Christ there are, and can be none: And to attempt to make any material artificial similitude of him, or to use one so made with a professed view either to worship, to receive our love and other religious respects as Christ's proxies, and mediums of conveying them to him, or merely to devotion, to serve for raising and working up our love to him, is at once an unworthy abuse both of our Lord Jesus Christ, the object of our love, who as he is incapable of being thus represented according to truth, even in his human nature, much less divine, and in his whole person, so allows not, but forbids every thing of this kind; and of our love to him also, making it degenerate from a rational spiritual affection into a carnal and mechanical passion; and gross indeed it would be, if when it has such an object, and so much better helps of a spiritual nature, it should need such mean and low incentives, the products merely of human fancy and imagination. But now the members of Christ are not only fit representatives of him in vertue of his spiritual image which they bear, but are his allow'd and appointed substitutes and representatives for this very purpose, to receive from us immediately the sensible fruits and offices of a tender and beneficent

neficent love which he being absolutely raised above the need of for himself in his own person, yet expects to have at second hand as certainly as if he could at the first; and which so yielded out of pure love to Christ, will be equally accepted by him, as if offered to himself. And here then our love will in effect comprehend all the same familiar and real expressions in external offices of kindness and civility, which Christ had in person from his disciples while on earth; that honour and complacency we have for all Christians, as accounted *the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight*, in proportion to the visible appearance of Christ's image on them, without regard to other distinctions; and that compassion we exercise toward them in trouble, and in supplying their wants, according to our ability, because they belong to Christ, being in his own estimation acts of love performed to himself, just as the omission of them is the same as if practised to himself; and no doubt of it, where love fails of the due and proper expressions of itself to Christians, or which is the same to Christ representatively, there it would equally and as surely fail in expressing itself to Christ personally.

Mat. xxv. 40, 45

Once more, if we love Christ, all the ordinances and instruments of his worship,

ſhip, which are partly memorials of him, partly means of ſpiritual intercourſe and communion with him, will proportionably have our love and attention. So *the Lord's-day*, called after Chriſt our Lord, by this its new name, and fixed to a new date in commemoration of his riſing from the dead on it, and thereby compleating our redemption, together with Chriſtian aſſemblies, and all the methods of devotion and ſervice, there and then to be obſerv'd; this day as well as other ſeaſons of meeting with Chriſt, will by all that love him, be called *honourable and a delight*, will be preferred in their fixed judgment to all opportunities for their worldly and earthly concerns, will be moſt longed for till their return, pleaſe when enjoy'd or recollected, and with the greateſt ſollicitude and alacrity be improved in converſing with him all the ways they can. So particularly that ordinance that bears the name of Chriſt on it in a diſtinguiſhing and moſt familiar manner, *the Lord's-Supper*, that ſweet and ſolemn feſtival of love between Chriſt and Chriſtians, happily ſuited in it ſelf, and recommended on purpoſe for the ſpecial remembrance of our abſent friend Jeſus, in his death and love, will never ſure be ſlighted, and through wilful contempt, or careleſs indifference, diſregarded and diſuſed by any in whoſe heart reigns the

love

love of Christ; it will be sacred and precious to all good Christians, even to such who through their doubts and fears, or other debarring circumstances, approach not for a time to the table of the Lord, so that they will not be without frequent desires after it, and an uneasy concern for their want of this dear pledge of their Lord's love and excellent means of intimate communion with him; and it will be delightfully and with thankful wonder used by such Christians who come to it *prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary.* No less also *the word of Christ*, this sweet letter of and from him, as the whole scripture is in regard to its original, being indited by the Spirit of Christ, and in regard to its main scope and end being to testify of him, cannot but *dwell richly* in all who love the hand that sends it, the person it recommends. They will frequently converse with, and meditate on it, till they render it familiar to them. The whole of it will be exceeding valuable to them, far above all the treasures of the world, and employ more of their pleasing study than any book besides: More especially the Gospel of it, the peculiar records contain'd in this divine volume of the person, offices, acts, and grace of their Saviour, and of God reconciled in him, will draw forth the

the closest application of their minds, and the delight of their hearts. To which may be added, that the ministers of the Gospel, the dispensers of these sacred oracles, who are Christ's Embassadors, and come charged with the offices and messages of his grace to men, will, however their character and persons be vilified by others, be held in high *esteem and honour* by all that love their Master *for their work sake;* and *their feet will be beautiful on the mountains* in the eyes of such. Isai. lii. 7.

But the view of Christ's being loved in his memorials, loved and duly regarded, with the other things that belong to him, naturally leads us to a

V^th^. Expression of love to him, which indeed includes the preceding instance, as being made by Christ matter of duty to us, tho' the special view of relation to Christ is a distinct reason of regard to such things, and that is an entire pleasing devotedness of soul to the whole commanding will of Christ. There is a mighty authority belongs to love, as a law within, even where there is no law without, subjecting us to another's power, and far more than any such law has without love; to command obedience to the will of him whom we truly love, as well as a peculiar sweetness, which it derives into

into that obedience that flows from it. And as thus love of its own nature makes a law and obligation where it finds none, to serve and obey its object; so undoubtedly it will take up and mix with an obligation to obedience, already made and found, give it new force, and add a singular ease, pleasure, and value to compliance with it. Thus it is plain our Lord makes both love necessary to obedience as without which for its quickening cause obedience would be dead and null, and recommends obedience as necessary to love, without which as its genuine fruit and proof, love would be only spurious and pretended, but not real; so that as certainly as they who don't love Christ will never serve and obey him, as they ought; they who do love him cannot but do this, at least truly aim at it. *If ye love me*, says Christ, *keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. If any man love me, he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.* Other principles may, and indeed ought to be employ'd on our duty to Christ as well as love. But then, none of them are sufficient to produce obedience qualified as it ought to be; unless love be present with and in them, which is of all the rest so far the most intimate

John i. 14, 15. xiv. 21, 23. v. 24.

and

and prevalent, the most governing and commanding, and must be so interwoven through their several operations; that being thus sway'd and tempered by love they coalesce with it, and become parts or fruits of itself. This is the case in particular of religious fear, which as importing such an holy awe of the glorious majesty and dignity of God, or our Saviour, as settles the displeasing and offending of him, the main and immediate object of our aversion and fear, and the pleasing of him in doing his will, the great and principal object of our sollicitude and care, is so implied and twisted with love as inseparably to belong to it; for thus we cannot but be ever affected and disposed to the persons we most love, and who best deserve our love, from the pure motion of a tender and ingenuous love to them. But as for *that fear which has torment*, a servile fear, as *love casts it out*, being inconsistent with it, so does obedience also; as it does whatever effect of any principle accords not with love, as detracting either from its truth, or at least, from its excellency and perfection. It is then the proper part and effect of true love to Christ, to influence and withal to regulate and perfect obedience; to give it its proper form and main qualification, without which it is no obedience at all in God's and Christ's account,

1 John iv. 18.

that is to make it free, hearty, voluntary, chosen, and pleasant, without reluctance and constraint, without the undue mercenary motives either of mere dread of punishment, or of mere hope of reward, like the obedience of a slave that only dreads, but don't love his master. *For*
John v. 3. *this*, says the apostle, *is the love of God*, the proper way of love, working and manifesting itself to God, and so to Christ, *that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*, but agreeable to us; if a yoke an easy one, and if a burden yet light. And thus *We*
xv. 14. *are Christ's friends*, prove ourselves true lovers and friends of him, *if we do whatsoever he commands us*; that is, do it in a friendly loving manner and spirit; being in love with the commands he honours us with, as esteemed truly our honour and delight, and chusing to be prescribed to by so worthy and gracious a Lord as Christ is, and to be governed by his will rather than our own; instead of entering an exception, or allowing ourselves wilfully to neglect or transgress any of his commands, offering ourselves readily to serve him in all the services we can in the world, as well as exercises of devotion, being glad to be employ'd by and for him, and strictly inquisitive into his will for this end; and finally, ambitious

and

and sollicitous of serving him throughout in love, and with a delight to do his will that we may so approve ourselves fully to him, as well as keep up our resolution and vigor to the end, conquering all the difficulties, and sweetening all the labour and fatigue of his service by love animating and mixing with it quite through.

And no less,

VI. Is a resigned and pleasing submission to the will of his providence in whatever he thinks fit to do with us, or others, a necessary part and expression of true love to Christ. For it is the genius of love to conciliate a good opinion of the actions and ways of the beloved object, which by the force of this principle is soon carried to an excess, when frail and imperfect creatures are set in our love, whose behaviour is often so irregular and absurd as to have more in it to blame than approve. But in regard to Christ, whose entire conduct being under the direction of unerring wisdom, and perfect goodness, must needs be right and proper; our love in compliance with the full scope given it, will reconcile us with ease and pleasure to all our Lord does. It will quell and beat down all rising murmurs, all peevish and fretful inclinations and complaints, under such trying dispensations that seem

Deut. xxxiii. 3. adverse to us. It will make us *sit down at our Redeemer's feet, as well as receive the law at his mouth;* both bearing with a patient temper, and admiring with a chearful composure all the various and shifting scenes he presents us with. We shall then under the influence of love readily approve the whole management, and say from the implicit persuasion we have of his infallible knowledge and wisdom, his unbias's'd truth and righteousness, and his unsuspected love, even where we can't for want of commanding the whole prospect discern the beauty and propriety of every part, *He has done all things well.* We shall then put that favourable construction in particular on every rod, wherewith he smites us, which himself warrants and allows, having said, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* Rev. iii. 19.

VII. And *Lastly,* True love to Christ will shew itself in a just and exact reflection on the due temper and behaviour of love, as found or missing in ourselves or others, with a suitable resentment in either case. It is of the nature of some of the affections, and of love more especially to excellent persons or things, to act on themselves, and so to give sure evidences to the reality of their existence. Thus love to Christ frequently discovers itself

itself in this reflex manner of operation, when other more direct and immediate expressions of it may not be discerned; and this more especially,

1.) In a way of suitable resentment of the defects or opposites of itself. Our love to Christ in this world of sin and imperfection, must needs have many occasions to manifest itself in this way; and here at least it will not be wanting so much as it may in other instances. The Christian is often conscious to his not loving his dearest Lord as he ought; but then far from being easy herein he is highly dissatisfied and displeased with what in himself comes short of, or contradicts this law of love, which he would have bear sway over his whole heart and life. Here then he lists the several uneasy and painful passions of the heart into the service of his love, giving them free vent, and willing to suffer all their smart and anguish. Aversion, sorrow, shame, indignation, and fear will now alternately or together fall on himself, and other things that have, or may contribute to the quenching this holy fire. One while it will be his trouble and grief that his disadvantageous situation in this world, at a distance from his Lord, amidst a thousand diverting objects, and meaner cares, and in a body of sinful flesh, unavoidably

subjects him to love his Saviour at best do what he can, but in a very confus'd, distracted, imperfect manner. Another while it afflicts and wounds his spirits, that his Lord at any time withdraws from him, and hides his amiable face under a cloud, that he cannot behold it, as it may now be seen, and himself has seen it heretofore, reflected through the glass of the word and ordinances; and for want of this chearing sight, his love, which lives on his smiles, in its nobler exercises, languishes within him. At other times the notorious disorders of his own heart, when sadly out of frame, cleaving to the dust of this world, and hardly raised to converse with its beloved, barren of spiritual and affectionate meditations, and ready to start back and steal away from him, even while professedly engaged with him, will have, spent on them, all the passions of uneasiness, and pain at once; will dissolve the heart in sorrow, pierce it with remorse, oppress it with shame, and fire it with indignation; so that the Christian will love himself less because he loves his Saviour no more, nay loath and abhor himself in dust and ashes. Further, sin universally will in a special manner be settled as the constant object of the hatred and resentment of the soul that loves Jesus; because it dishonours, displeases, and offends him,

as

as contrary to himself, his law, his whole design; and contrary therefore to the love we owe to Christ every way, as it reverses the strong obligations his love lays on our's, and the establish'd maxim for mutual love to act by, which is to hate as well as love together, and as it tends to weaken and suspend our love to Christ, as well as to prevent the outgoings of his to us. Reflecting on these things, together with the injury sin has done Christ already, the real and great pains, both of body and soul, and even death itself, which it has put him to; the Christian lover cannot but often pour out his soul in a particular and more abundant exercise of all the penitential affections in regard to his sins. No more will he be reconciled, or contentedly and pleasingly harbour them in his bosom than the friends and nearest relatives of one that has been murdered, will lodge, protect, and countenance the murderer, whom rather their love and value for their deceased friend will prompt them to demand to die for it. In like manner will he also hate with keen and irreconcileable aversion all his sins, which have procured the death of his Saviour; he will mourn with great bitterness over them; he will blush with inward confusion for them; he will be stung with hearty remorse at the thoughts of them; he will

rouse his zeal and revenge against them to such a pitch as will not be satisfied till they are driven out of the heart, and prosecuted to death. And all this the same, and nevertheless abated, as if sin, which brought Christ down to death, had kept him forever the prisoner of the grave; since it was not for want of malignity and demerit in sin that he was not wholly swallowed up in death, but it was his own victorious merit and invincible strength alone that rescued him from its power. Love to Christ will also put on a holy jealousy and tender fear, not of Christ, who never gives any occasion to it, being always constant and faithful in his love; but of the Christian himself, lest his own inconstant and fickle heart should *depart* more still, and in more dangerous degrees *from the living God*, his Saviour; of his sins, lest his past follies may have provoked a long absence, *and any root of bitterness springing up hereafter may defile himself*, and offend his Saviour; of all things about him, friends, business, company, pleasures, honours, riches, and diversions, which may soon become snares and charms to catch and hold the heart away from Christ; and of the final event and consequence, lest he should ever have his affections wholly alienated from Christ, or appear never to have had any true

true love to him at all, and leſt he ſhould by any means at laſt come to be eternally ſeparated and baniſhed from his preſence, and the privilege of loving, and being beloved by him, the very thought of which ſtrikes a chill horror into the heart. I might add alſo, that love to Chriſt will engage to a neglect and generous contempt of whatever has nothing of him mixed with its uſe and enjoyment; and that even the ordinances of communion with Chriſt, will not pleaſe and ſatisfy the ſoul that loves and ſeeks Jeſus in them, but finds him not.

And juſt as the uneaſy paſſions are thus moved in the Chriſtian's own caſe, for want of the love and enjoyment of Chriſt, and what oppoſes it: So they will proportionably exert themſelves in the caſe of others, when *through iniquity abounding the love of many waxes cold.*

On the contrary,

2.) There will be another reſentment in a way of pleaſure and ſatisfaction; when Chriſt is loved and enjoy'd in ſome good meaſure anſwerably to the preſent means and proviſions; when he reigns all over the heart, and it cleaves to him with ſteady affections; when the ſoul is conſcious to its own flames of love aſcending toward Chriſt with that upright and ſprightly motion, as to overcome all re-

sistance; when he is actually served with chearfulness and delight, and his interest, and all that belongs to him is found to be truly and superlatively dear to the soul. This pleases the Christian; he would always be thus affected himself, and he loves to see others so; assured that one so deserving as Christ can never be loved enough by any.

But from the acts and expressions, let us now proceed,

IV. To the properties and characters of genuine love to Christ. And they are partly such as agree to the nature of this affection in the general, and partly such as belong to love to Christ in distinction from all human creature-love, being common to it only with divine love, such as indeed it is, and is proved even from hence to be; both distinguishing the true love of real Christians from the false and counterfeit affection many profess for Christ.

1. Then, true love to Christ is sincere and unfeigned, love incorrupt, as the expression is, which is indeed but another general name, expressing its truth. Yet it may not be amiss to remark this distinctly, as a qualification of love, because it is so common for persons that bear the name of Christ, to content themselves with entertaining

Eph. vi. 24.

tertaining some general confused sentiments of respect and honour for him, and paying some deference to him in words and external services, and never look after the principle, the affection itself, that must support and animate all acts of devotion and service. Now love to Christ is a real thing of itself, distinct from all bodily exercise, and whatever outward acts or fruits may seem to import it, which neither will it be without. It has inward actings of its own direct and reflex, such as have been represented, not profes'd only, but truly found, and often exercised in all true Christians, so as to form the habitual prevalent and approved temper of their souls; though not so perfect, steady, and constant as they ought to be.

II. True love to Christ is a judicious and rational affection. Though Christians love an unseen, they don't love an unknown Saviour. Their love is not a blind irrational impulse, a mere sensitive commotion, wrought up to a pitch of fervor, by the force of fancy, and artificial moving language or representations, without judgment, understanding, or reason: No, but it is the result of solid judgment, and rational conviction. It is love according to knowledge; it possesses and employs the judgment chiefly, by its radical acts; and

and it is determined to its more passionate acts all along under its conduct, and not without its concurrence: And thus it becomes valuable and praise-worthy, which it would not, if injudicious and unintelligent. All true Christians, even those of the weakest minds, who may not be able to give a proper and rational account of the reasons of their faith and love to Christ, to others; yet see clear reasons within themselves to satisfy them from their firm belief that he is, and what he is, that they ought to love him, and that he deserves far more love than they, or any others can bestow on him. Hence then,

III. Love to Christ is free, as being the effect of rational choice; and yet more free still, as being a supernatural habit and influenced by divine grace. Divine and Christian love is freely given; and then freely gives itself and the whole soul up
Phil. i. 29. to God and Christ. *It is given to us* as *to believe in*, so to love Christ; and unless it be so given, *if we would give all our substance for this love*, use our utmost endeavours in the excitation and improvement of all our natural powers, for the
Sol. Song viii. 7. attaining it, *it would be utterly contemned*; our endeavours would be frustrate and leave us short of the acquisition of it.

We are drawn, and so we *come*, *we run* after Christ. Divine and Christian love has somewhat of an instinctive motion in it by virtue of a supernatural infusion and influence, and this much quicker, easier, stronger, sweeter, and exerting itself more readily on sudden emergencies than the slower operations of reason can account for: And yet has withal a rational determination grafted on and mixing with the former, by virtue of the admirable congruity of the divine attraction to our faculties, which makes all the acts of this love properly our own, our own free choice and delight, as much as, and even more than any other whatsoever. John vi. 44, 45. Sol. Song i. 4.

IV. True love to Christ is of a very active and fruitful nature. There is a great deal of life, strength, and sprightliness in the affection of love. It will cause a person to attempt and perform greater actions than at other times, and to do them in a braver and nobler manner, with more ease, dispatch, and spirit. Thus also the Christian's love will partake of this quality in a singular manner. It will make him do and suffer much for Christ, and that with a peculiar vivacity and alacrity. This is the special working grace; *Faith works by love.* And we read of *the labours of love.* But enough of this has been said already. Gal. v. 6. 1 Thes. i. 3.

V. True

V. True love to Christ is entire and universal. *He is altogether lovely;* and so must be altogether loved, loved in his whole character, or he is not loved at all. As it would be a criminal excess to love every thing in mortal creatures, because there is no perfect character on earth, but the best of men have their foibles and blemishes on the part of wisdom, and much more of goodness: So it would be a criminal defect in our love to Christ, and such as entirely mars it, if it make any exceptions and reserves in its respects to him. From whatever view of Christ the Christian's love takes its first rise as then suiting him best, it will never refuse any, but rather lead him to view him all round, and still admire, approve, and esteem all. The true Christian loves the person of Christ, and whatever belongs to it, either human or divine: loves him in all his offices; loves him as his great high-priest, in his atonement and righteousness, which with thankful joy he accepts, as the foundation of all his hope of salvation; and he loves him no less as his Prophet, Pattern, and King; loves him in the full compass of his saving design, as well to save him from sin as hell; loves him in all his words, of command as well as promise, and in all his works and ways.

VI. It

VI. It must be supreme. As Christ must be loved in all that belongs to his character: So he must be loved above all besides both persons and things in this world. He must have the sovereign empire of our hearts, without any rival or competitor; and all things else be laid at his feet, ever subordinated and ready to be sacrificed to his love. He deserves such a supreme love; no other suits his super-eminent excellency and merit of us; and he requires no less, assuring us that *he who loveth father or mother, son or daughter more than him, is not worthy of him:* Nay, that if a person hate not these, *and his wife, brethren, and his own life also, he cannot be his disciple*; hate them so in a comparative sense, and in competition with Christ, that notwithstanding he may and ought to love them with a moderated affection; yet the thought of their coming into any share of that unrivalled love he owes to Christ, or of his securing them by *keeping them with the loss* of him shall be odious and abhorred.

Mat. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26.

VII. True love to Christ is constant; it will abide to the end. It may be shaken by the storms and blasts of temptation; it may wither in its fruits, and seem ready to die, but yet it lives, and ever shall,

shall, at the root, which will sprout again; and so it will be growing still, less or more sensibly and strongly, till it at length grow up to its full perfection: And this because the watchful care of Christ and his Spirit is engaged to tend and improve it, by continual and seasonable supplies and communications from above. And there is this witness given to its continuance in the Christian's own breast; that he finds on reflection it has remained in him hitherto, notwithstanding several revolutions and vicissitudes, several doubts and fears often had about its truth and abiding; and further, that it is his steady purpose and fixed resolution through divine grace to go on in the use of his best endeavours for his own part to love Christ alway to the end, cost what it will, not brooking the thought of his departing from Christ any more than Christ departing from him.

VIII. And lastly, This love to Christ is great, so as to become unspeakable and full of glory; as the text declares the joy of these Christians, a fruit of their faith and love to have been. This character eminently belongs to the degrees and livelier acts of love in Christians of considerable attainments; though all true Christian love partake of it in distinction from

from human creature-love, being ſo poor, mean, little, and empty. Great and glorious is the love of Chriſtians to their Lord, in itſelf conſidered, and with regard to the object at all times, as not only ennobling, but enlarging and diverſifying it in ſuch manner that there is no other love like to it, none ſuch an happy compound of all the ſorts as it were of love in one; the profoundeſt veneration and homage, ſuch as is paid by ſubjects to their prince, mixed with the ſweeteſt familiarity, ſuch as is uſed between brethren. It is alſo great love, ſo as to be unſpeakable with regard to the Chriſtian's own ſenſe about it. For he finds he loves Chriſt more than he can poſſibly utter. And no wonder love is too big for the tongue to expreſs when it is often too big for the heart to contain. How have holy ſouls ſometimes felt ſuch a largeneſs of heart, in the preſent exerciſes of their love to Chriſt, and in the ſtrong notion formed of more due than they can find any meaſure for; that they have been oppreſſed by their own love, both what they have found work in them, and what more, with their mind and heart, they have been reaching after; and thus they have been in pain at once with keeping in their love, and more ſo in ſeeking a vent for it? "O! how I love thee, crys "then

Pſal. xlv. 11. Sol. Song viii. 1.

" then the Christian, my God, my Sa-
" viour! my tongue is too feeble to de-
" clare, my heart cannot well conceive
" how much I do, and how much more I
" would, love thee, being never capable of
" loving thee enough, answerably to what
" thou deservest and makest provision for."
And this love is also glorious, or glorified, as the original is, glorified in itself as well as its objects; because it produces glorious effects; it is triumphant and victorious over all difficulties and oppositions; and it is the beginning of heavenly and eternal glory; it borders on, and is an earnest and prelibation of the heavenly state; where love, and that, pure love of joy will be crowned, absolutely perfect and completely glorious indeed.

And thus then I have considered what belongs to the nature of love to Christ. it remains, to shew,

V. How faith accounts for this love in want of sight, so that this should not in reason be any obstruction to, while yet it is a commendation of it. And,

First, then let us see how faith contains a just reason and account for loving Christ, though never seen. Than which nothing will appear more manifest, if we only consider what faith is; in these two parts wherein the apostle sums it up.

I. That, *it is the evidence of things not seen.* Though we have never seen Christ in person; yet we are not without a sure testimony and record to which we may have recourse when we please, in the sacred scriptures, giving us a full and particular account of all those things relating to Christ, which have been before represented, and must in all reason be allowed sufficient grounds of the highest love to him. If this testimony then be but believed, and that as the testimony of God and so infallible, on those evidences, there are for it equally as good at least as there are for the truth of any testimony (as might easily be made appear); then it is plain, that this knowledge of faith ought to have the same effect on our love as if we saw Christ with our eyes. For it is not the manner of our coming to the knowledge of any object, but our knowledge itself whatever way had of its existence and being worthy of our love; on which the actual giving it, according to the capacity we are in of so doing, does and ought in reason to depend. And indeed a great part of the things of Christ, are of that nature, that they must at all times be matters of faith, not sight, such as are, his divinity and excellent person, his love to men, and the whole design of his undertaking; so that at least, in rela-

tion to these things for which Christ is chiefly to be loved, either no love must be supposed due to him, or capable of being given, or else it must be allowed that in the case even of personal sight, other things must found love to Christ on the single evidence of faith resting on a sufficient divine testimony, than ever can be seen; and so far we are perfectly on a level as to both believing and consequently loving Christ, with those who saw him in the flesh. Yet still it is not sufficient barely to believe or profess to believe these things, but we must exercise such a firm steady realizing persuasion about them in our own minds, as true faith requires, answerably to the nature of the things believed, and the provision made in the gospel for faith's conversing with them: And thus indeed *Christ will* dwell *in our hearts* by love, in necessary consequence of his *dwelling* there *by faith*; especially if we further consider,

Ephes. iii. 17.

II. That *faith is the substance of things hoped for, as well as the evidence of things not seen.* A foundation is laid in the gospel for hope of men's deriving the greatest good from Christ, who is there proposed to them under this special amiable view, as carrying on a design, which God had taken up for their salvation and happiness; a view, for want of which in their case,

Heb. xi. 1.

case, as left desperate, the fallen angels can have no love to God or Christ, though well known by them supremely amiable. For hope is a necessary source of love in regard to an object we absolutely depend on. Now it is the part of true faith to receive the gospel-record of Christ, not only as true and faithful, but as thus good and worthy of all acceptation, with a particular application to ourselves; and so to give it a subsistence within our own minds, as matter of joyful pleasing hope and expectation; and yet further, to lead us actually to rely on Christ, till we come in virtue hereof to have a real interest in and communion with him; and then it may become by degrees, an appropriating faith, assuring us that we are his, and causing us to hope for the future, that though we now see him not, yet we shall in a little time see him as he is, and be for ever with the Lord. Here then the experience and taste of Christ being gracious, joined with a good hope of being made happy for ever in and with him, entering into faith in him, and superadded to the former assent and consent, must certainly in all reason be allowed sufficiently to over-rule the want of not seeing him, so that it should be no obstruction against loving him. Which was the first thing here to be consider'd; and yet,

Secondly, Want of seeing Christ, though no reasonable bar against loving him, must be allowed to import some greater commendation of love under this circumstance than in the case of personal sight. Our Lord plainly determines this, in the case of faith thus circumstanced. *Blessed*, says he, that is, peculiarly *blessed are they that have not seen*, as thou, *Thomas*, hast done, *and yet have believed.* And of love, there is the very same reason as of faith, from which it springs. And this arises, as to both, from hence in short, (for we cannot now particularly pursue the case of either); that the difficulty and trial is greater on us to believe and love where all the reasons and grounds for both are purely internal in the mind, than when these are mixed with several that are external and sensible, which latter naturally strike us more forcibly. And by how much more difficulty we surmount in performing our duty, and readiness we hereupon express for it without being discouraged and held back by any disadvantages attending it, while it is still sufficiently notified and enforced, though not in the fullest manner and degree, being however that which God sees fit to use toward us, and so we acquiesce in, comply with it, and strive to carry it as far as ever we can, even so as to believe as firmly, and love as strongly and passionately

Joh. xx. 29.

nately, with fewer and less moving, as if we had many more, and the most sensible engaging means, minding and using so much the more carefully, the substantial reasons we have for faith and love, by how much less we have of the several affecting circumstances that attend the proposal of them to others; this shews a nobleness of mind, and ingenuity of spirit, the proper pitch of true virtue, which cannot but be very grateful and acceptable to God, as doing an honour to him. But I come now,

VI. And lastly, To the improvement of this subject; which shall be only in two uses.

First then, How much should we be concerned to observe the too obvious want of love to Christ in the Christian world, and withal to enquire whether it be not wanting in our own hearts also? When we reflect on the things that enter into the nature of genuine love to the Redeemer, and then take but a general and more transient survey of mankind; alas! where is this love to be found? How seldom do we discern any probable appearances of those fruits that argue the truth; and seldomer still such that argue the power of this principle reigning in the hearts and lives of men? Oh! how rare are the examples of first love, enquiring and panting after Christ with that

overbearing vehemency that will suffer no repulse, filling the mind with those numerous and delightful thoughts of him that will hardly admit room for any others, and exerting itself in other such like kindly and remarkable fruits that have used to distinguish the love of espousals to Christ, not only from other inferior love, but even from other Christian love? And then again, what sad, but just occasion, is there for that complaint against others, that *they have left their first love?* How Rev. ii. 4. *do all* in a manner *seek their own, not the* Phil. ii. 21. *things of Jesus Christ?* And how many instead of that hearty and supreme love for him, which is our distinguishing character and glory as Christians, have grown weary of his name, and are for casting it out? So that would *the Son of Man now* Luk. xviii. 7. *come, would he indeed find faith or love on the earth?* But, there is yet a nearer and closer concern we have in this matter, and that is, to examine our own hearts whether the true and supreme love of Christ be found there. And one would think this were a point that might be brought to a determinate and speedy issue; since love is of such a nature that it cannot easily conceal itself. For who knows not what he either loves or hates? And indeed, the conviction of those who have not the love of Christ in them, would

not

not be very difficult, if they would but use a little reflection or faithfulness with themselves; for so they will find either no workings of heart toward Christ at all, or none that bear the least proportion for ease, approbation, supremacy, fixedness, and vigor of pursuit, to what they feel to other things. But then the issue on the other side of the question has somewhat more of difficulty; and the true Christian, as on other accounts, so is apt to be suspicious of himself on those which even prove him to be a Christian; such as on the one hand, his high sense of the transcendent worth of Christ requiring such an extraordinary measure of love, that he cannot but be deeply struck at his finding nothing in himself answerable to it; and on the other hand, the odiousness and danger of not loving Christ, together with the joyful consequence of loving him in truth, which being presented to the mind in a strong light, makes the event here appear so momentous and important (and greater indeed there can be none) that a wrong judgment cannot but be dreaded, and a forward hasty determination avoided. Well but now let every one thus affected improve these his jealousies, fears and anxious sollicitudes into grounds of hope. For they are sure indications of a love of fixed and superlative

esteem and inclination to Christ lying at the bottom of the heart. I must refer it to every one at his own leisure, to bring his heart to the touchstone of love to Christ, that the several forementioned acts and properties thereof contain; which should often and seriously be done, not without prayer to God that he would search and try us, and sometimes an appeal to Christ himself whenever his love seems to stir in us, in some such manner as that of *Peter*, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*, or at least, that I would, I desire to love thee. And now what remains, but that we,

Joh. xxi. 15---17.

Secondly, Suffer the word of exhortation, to give to Christ all the love we are capable of, suitable to his glorious dignity, and the obligations he has laid on us, heartily and bitterly lamenting withal, our sin and folly in having withheld from him so long and so much, what has been his due. If we have never yet truly loved him, so often as we have had his lovely and attractive charms display'd before us; Oh! what tears are sufficient to bewail this baseness of our hearts? And what time can be too early to begin to love him? If we have the root of love to him in our hearts, yet cannot but be sensible how often it has been bound up, and hindred from springing out in its proper

bloſſoms and fruits by our neglect of it, while we have been exhauſting our ſpirits and ſtrength on the worthleſs growth of this deſert world: Let us now being aſhamed and grieved for miſplacing thus weakly and wickedly our time and affections, replace them where they ought to be principally employ'd; *ſtrengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die*, and ſtrive not only to recover our firſt love, but advance it farther than ever.

In order to excite and aſſiſt you herein, I would throw promiſcuouſly together a few hints, partly directive, partly perſuaſive of love to Chriſt: In purſuing which, and making all the efforts you are able on your own hearts, as you ought, you muſt ſtill look up to the Spirit of grace for his concurring influences, effectually to ſecure the firſt implantation, and all the after fruits of this love as well as every grace.

Let us then, as we would get and farther improve in love to the Redeemer converſe with him much by faith; ſee to it that we have real faith in him, firmly believing whatever the ſcripture reveals concerning him, and that, on that convincing evidence, there is for this, which we ſhould ſeek to inform ourſelves of as fully as we are able; and then ſee to it, that our faith have its perfect work, in realizing

realizing him to our thoughts, so as to fill our minds with the present clear and steady views of him, and in committing our souls to him, that we may obtain an interest in him, and gain experiences of his grace, evidences of our relation to him, and lively hopes of being for ever with him; and thus the way for love to embrace and cleave to him will be made plain. — Let us also consider often the excellency of loving him. How safe is this love? Safe from all danger of hurtful and sinful excesses: He being God himself, and deserving supreme love, together with his Father; who is honoured and loved with and through the Son, in all the love we give him: Safe also from all disappointments, since Christ makes provision for all the appetites of love, and that for ever. So that here this affection may give itself a full loose, without any restraint: But so no mortal love must; for being indulged in a free and large manner without a constant watch and check on it, it both quickly becomes guilty, and defeats itself, being then only secure of innocence, and from fretting disappointments, when exercised with moderation and cautious reserve, without expecting either a full or a long gratification. — *How fair and pleasant* also *is this love for delights!* What a grace and beauty is there in it?

How seemly and comely? And is it not a love made wholly for pleasure? So from the part of Christ it is in a manner altogether, as has been shewed. And if there be any uneasinesses go into it from our own part, chiefly because it is performed no better to him, they become agreeable, because meet and suitable. —— But in all other love, uneasinesses and pains spring up on every side; the best and most generous friendships are partnerships mostly of woe and grief? —How useful and profitable too is this love? It is its own reward by the pleasure its exercise gives; and it draws after it a sure reward; since Christ as first, will be also last in this mutual love of friendship, making ample returns of larger communications of love and grace to those that love him? The Christian lover shall never suffer the anguish of loving and not being loved again. And what harm can it ever do us to love Christ, since whatever it may cost us to maintain, he will surely pay, and that with a rich overplus? — This love is also open for us to take up, cultivate, and gratify. It is much, considering how glorious our Saviour is, and how contemptible we are, that he will give us leave to love him, and accept our love! And yet more than this, he invites and commands our love, and that with such importunity

See John xiv. 21, 23.

portunity and earneſtneſs as if he were to be happy in it, when yet it is all for our ſakes, that he may fill this affection, which nothing elſe can. Nor does he except any; but all are welcome to love him, that will, and ſo as to be loved by him again, even thoſe who are of ſuch diſagreeable characters, that few men of ingenuity or delicacy will either love or care much to be loved by. And is love to Chriſt thus laid open on his ſide? We ſure ſhould the rather for this, from an ingenuity of temper, ſtrive to keep it open on ours, and for this end uſe as we may, all the creatures as friends of the bridegroom, to conduct us into his embraces, and not permit them to be rivals to intercept our love from him. — And after all, muſt we not ſee then the folly, baſeneſs, ingratitude, and extreme danger of not loving Chriſt? Can any thing be more ſtupid and unnatural than this? For what end have we this affection if we don't employ it on the object that beſt ſuits and only gratifies it? Will it not be an eternal brand on the human nature in all who have the power of love, and have heard of the rich and moſt ſuitable proviſion that is in Chriſt to give it full ſcope and perfection, and have had the offer of him made to their love; to ſuffer it never truly and fully to paſs on him, but ſtill to weary it-

ſelf

self in the restless pursuit of worldly objects after this passion has been defeated a thousand times in this chase, and would be so, if it were to go on in it to eternity? What account can any give to himself, if he use never so little reflection, for the very folly of this conduct? And can there be any thing more ungrateful? What! prefer every thing, every creature, every trifle, every vain pleasure, every sordid lust to thy Saviour, who has already done and suffered so much to merit thy best and highest affections, and now freely offers thee the largest supplies of good to entertain them? What unparallelled, monstrous ingratitude is this! which cannot sure but have a dreadful punishment equal to its black guilt; and accordingly has denounced against it one of the severest curses which the whole book of God contains. For thou art *cursed*, now, *whoever thou art, that lovest not the Lord Jesus Christ, until*, and wilt feel the full weight and execution of this *curse when the Lord shall come.* And further, let us consider what associates and companions we join ourselves to, on the one hand, when we don't love the blessed Jesus: In which case we are confederates with the cursed spirits of hell, and even outsin devils, who never were invited and encouraged as we are, to love Christ, who is

See 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

no

no Saviour for them as for us; and that, on the other hand, we are joined in fellowship with all the glorious spirits of light, angels and all the spirits of just men made perfect, when we truly love, and the more we love our Redeemer. — And finally, let us consider that in loving Christ on earth, we are not only doing the same work they are all doing in heaven, though they far better than we do or can, and the reflection on the exalted, lively, unwearied, warm, and rapturous strains of their love should often smite our hearts for our cold and languid love, and kindle it into flames, emulating seraphic ardors; but we are thus loving Christ here, where we see him not, training up for heaven, where we shall see him and love him too, just in like manner as those that are now about the throne; and where our love to Christ, and his to us will both be perfected together.

CHRIST

Christ, the Son of God, the great subject of a Gospel-Ministry, opened and recommended,

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IN TWO

SERMONS

Preach'd at

St. *HELLEN*'s

APRIL 17th and 24th:

On Acts ix. 20.

By *JOHN GUYSE.*

THE INTRODUCTION.

ACTS ix. 20.

And straightway he preach'd Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

TO preach Christ is so unfashionable in our age, so much a term of reproach, and so disagreeable to the taste of many, who love to rank themselves among the polite, that nothing can more expose a man to their contempt and scorn than to attempt it. They seem as much to disdain him, as the *Epicurean* and *Stoick* Philosophers did the apostle *Paul*, whom they ridiculed for *preaching Jesus, and the resurrection*, as if he were a *setter forth of strange gods*. This was

SERM. I. preach'd *April* 17, 1729.

Acts xvii. 18.

not much to be wonder'd at in men of their education, temper, and profeſſion. But where is the ſenſe or decency of perſons calling themſelves by Chriſt's name, and ſneering at it, and doing what they can to thruſt him out of their religion; or to leſſen him and their own concernment with him in it? This is really prepoſterous and amazing.

But they that know Chriſt themſelves, and are call'd to preach him to others, have no reaſon to be afraid or aſham'd to own him, and to ſpread his glories thro' all their holy miniſtrations. The apoſtles counted him the glory of theirs: All their preaching was characterized by their *preaching Chriſt*, it center'd in him, and derived its efficacy from him. And I hope there are ſtill ſome among us, that reverence and adore his ſacred name, and would count it their glory to be able to ſay with them, *Thanks be to God, who always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place.* —— *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.*

2 Cor. ii. 14, 17.

The apoſtle *Paul*, ſpoken of in our text, began his miniſtry with *preaching Chriſt*, and perſiſted in it to the end of his days; tho' he himſelf was once as infamous

infamous for his furious oppoſition to him, as he afterwards was famous for his zealous preaching him. He in our context is call'd by his *Jewiſh* name *Saul*; but afterwards, when he was made the apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, he was commonly known by his *Roman* name *Paul*, the more acceptable name to them.

In the beginning of this chapter we find him *breathing out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord*, and going with ſanguinary credentials from the *Jewiſh* Sanhedrim to *Damaſcus*, that if *he found any of them, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to* Jeruſalem. But Chriſt met him in the way, and by a remarkable conduct of providence and grace reveal'd himſelf to him, gave an effectual turn to his mind and heart, favour'd him with a viſion, and fill'd him with the Holy Ghoſt. He then ſtaid certain days with the diſciples at *Damaſcus*. *And ſtraightway he preach'd Chriſt in the ſynagogues, that he is the Son of God.* This account runs thro' the chapter, as far as our text.

What an amazing change was here! what a monument of diſtinguiſhing ſovereign grace was this! He of a vile and bigotted perſecutor, became a real Chriſtian, and an eminent miniſter of Chriſt at once. He call'd upon his name, and

Gal. i. 12, 15, 16. preached him to others. *The gospel that was preach'd of him, was not after man. For he neither received it of man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* And *when it pleased God, who separated him from his mother's womb, and called him by his grace, to reveal his Son in him, — immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood.* But, as we have it in our text, he *straightway preached Christ.* Out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spake. He no sooner knew Christ, but took the first opportunity to preach him in the synagogues of *Damascus*, where he then was.

There were more synagogues than one in that city, as there were in several others. And the apostle went to all these, or to as many of 'em as he could be admitted to; and there began his ministry, *preaching Christ, that he is the Son of God.* Or, as it might be rendered, * *He preached Christ, because he is the Son of God.* The first way of reading it intimates what he particularly preach'd concerning Christ, *viz.* that he is the Son of God. And the other gives the reason of his preaching Christ, *viz.* because he is the Son of God.

In farther discoursing on these words, it may be proper to consider,

* Ἐκήρυσσε τὸν χριστὸν, ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.

First,

First, *The titles or characters, that describe the subject of the apostle's ministry,* and,

Secondly, *His preaching upon that subject.*

Let us consider,

First, *The titles or characters that describe the subject of the apostle's ministry.* And they are *Christ, the Son of God.*

Here are *two* characters of him, whom the apostle preach'd. They both relate to the same person, but are terms of different import. Otherwise the meaning of the proposition in our text would be only this, "He preach'd Christ, that he is "Christ." Or, according to the other reading, "He preach'd Christ, because "he is Christ." But I apprehend the term, *Christ,* more immediately relates to his office; and *the Son of God,* to his original nature, or divine person. And as the last of these is the foundation of the first, the order of discourse requires that we begin with that. Therefore,

I. The *first* title to be spoken to is *the Son of God.*

Christ is often call'd in Scripture *the Son of God,* his *own Son,* his *only begotten Son,* and by way of eminence and peculiarity, *the Son,* in distinction from the Father and Spirit, and from all other sons.

In treating on this title, *the Son of God*, I shall by divine assistance aim at *two* things.

1. *Settle the sense or meaning of it.* And,

2. *Offer something to support that meaning.*

1. *Settle the sense or meaning of this title, the Son of God.*

And here some difficulties must be removed before this character can be adjusted. 'Twill therefore best answer my design to proceed by the *three* following propositions.

Prop. I. *The foundation of this title, the Son of God, doth not lye in his extraordinary conception and birth of the virgin.*

Luke i. 35. The *Socinians* place it here, and their principal argument for it lies in the angel's words, when he said to the virgin, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*

But their conceit, built upon this passage, as if Christ's filiation took its rise from this extraordinary conception and birth, supposes that he was not the Son of God *before*, and that this title belongs to him only on the account of what he

was

was *according to the flesh.* Both of which are suppositions directly contrary to the whole current of scripture, as will appear in some following parts of our discourse.

The design therefore of this passage is not to give an account of the original proper foundation of that name; but I take the meaning of it, as it lies in our translation, to be, that the production of Christ's human nature, in this extraordinary way by the Holy Ghost, was an intimation of the dignity of his glorious person, to whom it should be united; that he is indeed the Son of God: And therefore *that holy thing that should be born of her*, should bear his name, or *should be called the Son of God.* And so it amounts to much the same sense with what *was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us.* Mat. i. 23.

This is a citation of an ancient prophecy in *Isa.* vii. 14. And the angel in his message to *Mary* had intimated that *she* was the virgin there intended, saying to her, *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son,* that Son whose name should be called *Emmanuel,* and with a reference hereunto, he tells her, that her conception, while a virgin, Luk. i. 31.

ſhould be by the Holy Ghoſt, which would evidence her to be the mother of that *Emmanuel; and therefore*, according to that evidence, *that holy thing which ſhould be born of her, ſhould be called the Son of God.*

But there is another way of tranſlating this laſt clauſe of the verſe, and that is, *Even becauſe* (διὸ καὶ) *that holy thing, which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be call'd the Son of God.* And ſo his being call'd the Son of God, or his really being ſo (as this phraſe often ſignifies) is given as the reaſon of this extraordinary birth, inſtead of the extraordinary birth's being given as the reaſon of his bearing that name. It was highly fit that his birth ſhould be of this extraordinary miraculous kind, becauſe of the dignity of his perſon, as the Son of God. Hence,

Prop. II. *It is not barely a title of office, or a title merely relative to his being the Meſſiah.*

The *Socinians* carry on the ſonſhip of Chriſt from his birth, to his miſſion, reſurrection from the dead, and exaltation at the Father's right hand. And their principal ſcriptures and arguments upon theſe heads have of late years been adopted, and urged with additional force, by ſome others, tho' with a contrary view;

and therefore what may be anſwered to theſe, will be an anſwer to them.

Some, whom I love and honour, and who have exalted ſentiments of the proper divinity of our dear Lord, have ſuppoſed that his filiation, or his being call'd the Son of God, hath no reference to his divine pre-exiſtent nature, conſider'd abſolutely, or irreſpectively to his office; but is purely œconomical, and only relates to his being the Meſſiah. Theſe, contrary to the *Socinians*, advance this poſition with a good deſign for the honour of Chriſt; but I humbly think, without ſufficient evidence, and with much more diſadvantage than advantage, in the whole, to the glorious cauſe they intend to ſerve by it.

The main foundation of their hypotheſis, as far as I can learn, lies in the way of prefacing his ſonſhip, as they apprehend it, in *Pſal.* ii. 7. and of applying it to Chriſt in the new teſtament. They plead that his ſonſhip is ſpoken of in that *Pſalm*, as the reſult of a decree. *I will declare the decree; the Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And this, ſay they, is apply'd in *Acts* xiii. 32, 33. to the reſurrection of Chriſt, which was the great proof of his being the Meſſiah, or the Son of God; accordingly it is apply'd in Pſal. ii. 7.

in *Heb.* i. 5. and v. 5. to his mediatorial office. And these are the only places, where it is cited in the new Testament.

But, admitting that this *decree* relates to God's saying, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, it may very well be understood as respecting, not the *original*, but the *evidence* and *declaration* of his sonship. God the Father had decreed that it should be remarkably demonstrated, or manifested by his resurrection from the dead; and therefore the apostle applies it to that great event in the 'forementiond *Acts* xiii. 32, 33. *We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfil'd the same to us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second* Psalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* But he was the Son of God before this; and therefore in another place he is said, not to be *made* or *constituted*, but *declared to* Rom. i. 3, 4. *be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*, in opposition to what he was as the *seed of* David *according to the flesh.* His resurrection was the highest demonstration, that he was indeed the Son of God, as he had often asserted himself to be; for otherwise, after he had 2 Cor. xiii. 4. been *crucify'd thro' weakness*, he would never

never have *lived* again *by the power of God.* And it was an equal demonſtration, that he was the Son of God, partaking of the ſame divine nature and eſſential properties with the Father, if by *the Spirit of holineſs* we underſtand, as ſome do, his divine nature; becauſe he thereby raiſed himſelf from the dead. Accordingly he ſpoke of his reſurrection as his own act, and as what he performed by his own power. *Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. He ſpake of the temple of his body.* And at another time, *I lay down my life, that I might take it again. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.* John ii. 19, 21. and x. 17, 18.

But, after all, why may not the *Preface* in the ſecond *Pſalm*, viz. *I will declare the decree*, relate to what follows in the next verſe, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion?* This is without all diſpute the object of a divine decree: And the words, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, may be conſidered as a parentheſis, to ſpecify the perſon concern'd in this decree, and to intimate the Father's great delight in him and approbation of him, as fit for, and worthy of the high truſt and revenue he had decreed to him. The *decree* relates to a futurity; but Pſal. ii. 8.

Thou

Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, expreſſes ſomething already exiſtent; and therefore to refer the decree to this, makes the language not ſo natural, as to refer it to God's *giving his Son the heathen for his inheritance*, &c. And it is obſervable, that tho' the words, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, are three times quoted in the new teſtament, they are never quoted with this preface, as if his ſonſhip were the matter of a decree. In this light we may take the quotation of them in *Acts* xiii. 32, 33. to carry this ſenſe, " *God hath rais'd up Jeſus again*, and thereby given teſtimony to his being the promiſed Meſſiah. It hereby *appears* that he, who called himſelf the Son of God, is that Meſſiah, *as it is alſo written*, to deſcribe him, *in the ſecond Pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*"

Another place where this paſſage is cited, is *Heb.* i. 5. *To which of the angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?* Here I humbly conceive it is brought in to ſet out the original dignity of the perſon of Chriſt above the angels, according to the grand deſign of this chapter, as an introduction to the glory and perfection of his prieſthood. And tho' the following words in the cloſe of the verſe, *And again, I will be*

be a Father to him, and he ſhall be my Son, ſhould be ſuppoſed to have a reference to his office-capacity; yet there is no neceſſity that the foregoing words, which are ſtronger and more emphatical, ſhould be confined to the ſame reference. For as theſe are quotations of different texts, that were ſpoken on different occaſions, why may they not be apply'd to Chriſt under different conſiderations of him, by which he appears to be ſuperior to the angels, and the foundation of which lies in his eternal relation to the Father, as his only begotten Son? One of theſe teſtimonies may relate to his original dignity as the Son; and the other to the Father's peculiar love and care of him as Mediator, that he would treat him as a father treats his ſon; and both are proper proofs of his ſuperiority to the angels. But to keep up the *governing* view of his original dignity, as the eternal Son of God, which ſhines thro' all his office, and is the foundation of all his glory in the diſcharge of it, the apoſtle immediately proceeds in the following verſes to the twelfth verſe, to repreſent him under diſtinguiſhing characters of Deity, as the object of the worſhip of angels; as God, whoſe throne is for ever and ever; and as that Jehovah that laid the foundation of the earth, and remains unchangeably the ſame.

The

The laſt place where this text is cited, and apply'd to Chriſt, is *Heb.* v. 5. where it is ſaid, *Chriſt glorify'd not himſelf to be made an high prieſt; but he that ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* Some ſuppoſe it is hereby intimated, that Chriſt became our high-prieſt by God's ſaying this to him; or becauſe he ſaid to him, *Thou art my Son,* &c. But I can ſee no connexion in the words to lead us to this ſenſe. It ſeems moſt natural to ſuppoſe that they are only deſcriptive of the perſon conſtituting, and of the perſon conſtituted in this office, *viz.* the eternal Father, and his eternal Son. Hence,

Prop. III. *This title hath a reference to Chriſt's divine pre-exiſtent nature, or to his intrinſick eternal relation to the Father in the Godhead.*

I take the *Son of God,* to be a title originally founded in a neceſſary eternal generation, which is peculiar to him, and altogether above our conception as to the manner of it; but according to which he is and always was partaker of the ſame nature, and eſſential perfections with the Father, perſonally diſtinguiſhed from him, and neceſſarily co-exiſtent with him. And as the Son of God is that divine perſon of the ſacred Three, that was to be

the Meſſiah, this title is often uſed to characterize him as ſuch, in teſtimony of his Deity, and in diſtinction from the Father and Spirit. Hence it was exceeding proper that this title ſhould be ſolemnly declared at his *incarnation*, when he was to enter upon the diſcharge of his glorious office; and at his *reſurrection*, when he had finiſhed the work his Father gave him to do upon earth; and it was as proper, that he ſhould be commonly known and diſtinguiſhed *all along* by it, when he is ſpoken of as the *Chriſt*; becauſe his divinity was eſſential to the diſcharge of his office, and was manifeſted by it.

He was called *the Son of God* at his *birth*, for the ſame reaſon as he was call'd *Emmanuel, God with us*, to intimate his divine dignity, and what a mighty Saviour he ſhould be. But this was no more the original of his being *the Son*, than it was of his being *God*. It was only a declaration of his title, which he had a divine right to before, in like manner as God's order, that *all the angels ſhould worſhip him*, at his *bringing him into the world*, was a declaration of his being the proper object of their worſhip, which he really was, and had a divine right to be before. Mat. i. 23. Heb. i. 6.

He was likewiſe *declared to be the Son of God*, by his *reſurrection from the dead*. Rom. i. 4.

But

But this could not be to *begin* a title, which he unqueſtionably had before. It was only to atteſt the truth of that title, as it appeared in the divine power by which he raiſed himſelf, and in his Father's owning him to be, what he had often call'd himſelf, *the Son of God*; and to aſſure us of the infinite dignity and acceptableneſs, that his divine perſon gave to the ſacrifice he had offer'd to take away ſin.

And his being ſo *often* characterized as *the Son of God*, when he was ſpoken of as the Meſſiah, is no more an argument againſt his having that title on the account of his divine nature; than his being ſo *often* characterized as the *Son of Man*, when at other times he was ſpoken of as the Meſſiah, is an argument againſt his having that title on the account of his partaking of the true nature of man. Tho' the *Son of God*, the *Son of Man*, the *King of Iſrael*, and *the Chriſt*, were promiſcuouſly uſed for one another; yet they were not merely exegetical of each other, without any variation of the idea. They were indeed diſtinguiſhing appellations or denominations of the ſame perſon; ſo that he, who was the Son of God, and the Son of Man, was the Meſſiah, and the King of Iſrael, and *vice verſa*. But the Son of God, and the Son of Man, were

were denominations of him from his *divine* and *human* natures; and the Christ, and the King of Israel, from his *office*.

It is freely allow'd that the distinct manner of the divine subsistences, and consequently the eternal generation of the Son, and their relations *ad intra* are inconceivable, and infinitely above all that we are acquainted with; and all imperfection must be remov'd from them. But unless there are eternal intrinsick relations between them, by which they are distinct persons, irrespective to œconomical actings, *Sabellianism* is unavoidable. And if the *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*, are not terms that the scripture uses to express those relations, I know no others that bid so fair for it; and at length, perhaps, the relations themselves may come to be call'd only œconomical. It therefore seems necessary to consider these distinctive titles, as names belonging to, and expressive of their original relations to each other, that we may keep up the idea of their real eternally necessary and distinct subsistences in the one undivided Godhead. And while these relations, and consequently the generation of the Son, are considered as *absolutely necessary* and *eternal*, they neither can be proved to be impossible, or inconsistent with the independency and

neceſſary ſubſiſtence of the Son in the ſelf-exiſtent Godhead.

Nor can I ſee any incongruity in ſuppoſing that the ſcripture repreſents Chriſt, as *the Son of God*, ſometimes when his original nature is ſpoken of *abſolutely*, and at other times when he is ſpoken of in his office-capacity. Nay, there ſeems to be a neceſſity that his titles originally divine, ſhould be ſometimes mention'd with relation to his office, that we may know what a great and glorious Meſſiah we have. How elſe ſhould it appear with full and proper evidence, that he is *God manifeſted in the fleſh?* And if but one inſtance can be found, where this title hath no relation to his office, that one inſtance will be a ſufficient proof, that it belongs to his original nature.

2 Tim. iii. 16.

Having thus ſettled the ſenſe or meaning of this title, the next thing that lies before us is to

2, *Offer ſomething to ſupport this ſenſe*; Or

Shew that more is intended by this title, the Son of God, than a denomination of him as Mediator, or as born of the virgin, and proved to be the Meſſiah by his reſurrection from the dead; and that therefore it muſt have a reference to his divine pre-exiſtent nature, or to his intrinſick eternal relation to the Father in the

the Godhead. To evince this, let us consider the following things,

(1.) *His generation is eternal.*

The Lord possessed him in the beginning of his ways before his works of old. When there were no depths, before the mountains were settled; before the hills, was he brought forth. Then he was by him, as one brought up with him, like a Son in the bosom of his Father. And this is intermingled with an account of eternal covenant-transactions between the Father and him, and of his being *set up from everlasting* as Mediator and Head of the church, to shew that he was then really subsisting with the Father, and therefore was capable of bearing a part in those eternal settlements. But there seems to be a plain difference between the terms, *brought forth*, and *set up*. The first may well enough agree to the peculiar manner of his subsistence, and the other to his office. In a different nature from that, in which he was born at *Bethlehem*, * *his goings or* Prov. viii. 22, 24, 25, 30. Ver. 23. Mic. v. 2.

* מוצאתיו מקדם מימי עולם A learned critick observes upon this place, that 1. The act of *coming forth* is expressed as *eternally acting*. The verbal noun implies the *present*; the other words, *that present to be eternal*. 2. The word מוצאות found only here, is from יצא used *Gen.* xxv. 25. to express that action of the infant at his birth, which brings him into the world. *When* Rebeccah's *days to be delivered were fulfill'd*

comings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, or from the days of eternity. The expressions are the same that are used in scripture to express the eternity of the Father himself. And why may not his goings forth, in what is call'd an eternal generation, be here opposed to his birth of the virgin, according to the flesh? They have been perpetual like the rays of the sun (as the ancients loved to express themselves) co-eternal with the Father, without beginning or end, and never separated from him.

Hence his generation is spoken of as a permanent thing, of which it ever hath been, is, and will be said, *This day have I begotten thee*; or as it has been render'd, *I am this day begetting thee*, to denote an eternal abiding, unbeginning, and never ending act †. Hence.

Psal. ii, 7.

(2.) *He*

fill'd —— *and the first came out,* ויצא הראשון. And also for the *son of* Abraham's *coming from his own bowels.* Gen. xv. 4. —— 3. *The personal properties and natural unity* of the Father and the Son are here sufficiently expressed; the *subsistence* of each is complete, tho' the *nature* of both is but *one.* —— He, *whose comings out are from eternity*, cannot be *the Father*, from whom he is *eternally coming forth.* And 4. The act being only *acting*, not *acted*, does not imply a *derived nature*, a *divided* nature, a *caused* nature; or *any nature in any respect different from the Father's nature.* The true scripture doctrine of the holy Trinity, by Mr. *Nelson*'s friend. *p.* 83, 84.

† The *Hebrew* is יהוה אמר אלי בני אתה אני היום ילדתיך and should be render'd *Jehovah hath*

(2.) *He is so begotten of the Father as to be of the same nature with him.*

The very first notion of sonship in any proper sense suggests this: And there is

hath said to me, thou art my Son, I am this day generating thee. For (1.) That which can be *now* said to be done *this* day, and might be so said *yesterday*, and may be so said to *morrow*, and so on from eternity to eternity, if it could be spoken of any human act, would determine such act to be always acting, never acted; and therefore would oblige us to alter the expression and say, *doing* in the present, instead of *done* in the preter tense. And therefore since this is spoken here of an *eternal Being*, since God himself said *so long since*, and *still* saith, and always *will* say, ——*I*—— *this day*, —— even the meanest capacity will agree, that whatever act this is, which is thus spoken of, must be *always acting*, never *acted*, and therefore that the word, denoting this action, ought to be express'd in the present tense, and not in the preter, *I am this day generating thee.* (2.) This is according to the *Hebrew* idiom, which has no present tense, but expresses it, sometimes by the preter, and sometimes by the future. And accordingly the new version of the Bible, *Psal.* i. 1. renders הלך in the preter by *walketh* in the present tense. And *Solomon* says of himself *Eccl.* i. 12. I the preacher הייתי in the preter, for *am* king in *Jerusalem* in the present tense. (3.) And this the *Rabbins* themselves allow. See *Aben Ezra* on *Psal.* i. and on *Job* iii. 2. and *Sal. Jarchi* on *Gen.* xxiv. 25. and *Elias Levita in Hab. bachur. Orat.* i. *Fund.* 4. —— Now hence we must infer, 1. That there is in the Deity, *Father and Son*, two *distinct persons*, each completed by his proper subsistence; the Father is generating the Son; the Son is receiving his generation from the Father. 2. This act (if I may call it an act) being said to be *acting*, not *acted*, we cannot hence infer that the nature of the Father is divided, or another nature produc'd. And consequently, the Son of God, with respect to this generating, cannot be said to be a *divided Being*. 3. That the *Father* and *Son* in the Deity are *co-eternal* and *equally self-existent* and *independent*. Ibid. *p.* 81, 82, 83.

an apparent agreement between the notions of neceſſary *emanation* from the Father, and *ſameneſs of nature*; and between *generation*, and a *proper ſonſhip* anſwerable to it. But I can ſee no ſuch agreement in the ideas of *conſtitution in office* and *ſonſhip*, or of *generation* and *mediatorſhip*, that one of theſe ſhould be expreſſive of, or merely relative to the other. Nor can I ſee any thing in the notions of *judge* and *ſurety*, of *Law-giver* and *Redeemer*, of the *offended party* and *Mediator*, that anſwers the ideas of relation between *father* and *ſon*. Nor do I find that office-characters uſually denote any thing like filiation, or that they are ever uſed in ſcripture to intimate, that the perſons that bear them are ſons of God on that account; except in one inſtance, which ſhall be conſider'd anon.

The *angels* are call'd the ſons of God, becauſe they derive their beings from him, and bear his likeneſs, but never becauſe they are put into high and eminent offices by him. And *believers* are called the ſons of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually begotten of him, and receive *a divine nature* that reſembles him, and becauſe they are adopted into his family by means of their union with his own eternal Son: But *miniſters* never bear that name on the account of their conſtitution in office,

2 Pet. i. 4.

which

which ſhews that the appellation relates to perſons irreſpective to office.

Indeed *magiſtrates* are once called *the children of the moſt High*, on the account of their office: But they are likewiſe call'd *gods* in the ſame verſe and context on the ſame account, which ſhews that theſe are uſed as terms of the ſame import in that place; and that they are call'd the *children of the moſt High* on no other account, and in no other ſenſe than that in which they are called *gods*. And if this is allow'd in the higheſt ſenſe of the terms, *Son* and *God*, with reſpect to Chriſt, (as he intimates it ought to be in his diſcourſe on this paſſage in *John* x. 34, 35, 36) we muſt either own that the term, *God*, when uſed of him, is only a denomination of him as the Meſſiah; or elſe that the term, *Son of God*, is a denomination of him as partaking of the divine nature. Pſal. lxxxii. 6.

If in the common uſe of language with relation to intelligent beings, the term, *Son*, always ſignifies one of the ſame *nature* with his Father; and if in the lower and more improper uſe of the title, *ſons of God*, there is uſually a reſpect to the god-like *nature* of thoſe that bear it, and not to their office: It ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe that, when Chriſt is call'd the *only begotten Son*, and *the Son of God*, by way of eminence and peculiarity in

the higheſt and propereſt ſenſe that the expreſſions, ſpeaking of God after the manner of men, can admit of, it ſhould relate not to his office, but to his *nature*, which he has in common with the Father.

Hence, his being ſo begotten of the Father, as to be of the ſame nature with him, may be ſtrongly argued from his being the *only begotten Son*, and that Son who is *one* with the Father, *I and my Father are one.* He is ſo eſſentially one with him, that he *that hath ſeen the Son, hath ſeen the Father alſo.* For *he is in the Father, and the Father in him*; and he is that Son, *who is the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.* He call'd the Father his *own proper* Father (πατέρα ἴδιον) thereby *making himſelf equal with God*, as the *Jews* rightly underſtood him. He was the Father's *own proper* Son (τῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ) and *the Son of himſelf* (τὸν ἑαυτῦ υἱὸν) in oppoſition to ſons by adoption, ſpoken of in that context. And he is *the Son of the living God*, and *the Son of the Father in truth and love*, truly partaking of his nature and beloved of him. What do all theſe, and ſeveral other ſcriptures of the like ſtrain mean, but that the title is not to be taken in an improper and diſtantly metaphorical ſenſe; but in as proper and natural a ſenſe as poſſibly can be, to expreſs

John x. 30.

Chap. xiv. 9, 10.

Heb. i. 2, 3.

John v. 18.

Rom. viii. 3, 32.

Mat. xvi. 16.

2 John 3.

preſs the ſameneſs of his nature, with the Father, or to denote that he is ſuch a Son as naturally proceeds from, or is begotten of the Father, in diſtinction from all others, who are ſons by creation, or by free adoption, or by regenerating grace? Hence,

(3.) *Properties and prerogatives, peculiar to the divine nature, are aſcribed in their higheſt ſtrains to Chriſt, as the Son of God.*

The divine nature carries all its eſſential perfections along with it; and *eternity* of exiſtence has already been ſhewn to belong to Chriſt, as the Son. *Self-ſufficiency, ſovereignty, omnipotence,* and *omniſcience* are likewiſe aſcribed to him, and *divine worſhip* is order'd to be paid him, under the character of the Son. He, like the Son of the living God, *has life in himſelf, as the Father has life in himſelf: He quickens whom he will. The Father ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth,* nothing can be hid from his intuitive all-comprehending mind. *What things ſoever the Father doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe,* in the ſame godlike way, and with the ſame abſolute power; nothing is too hard for him to do: And *all men muſt honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* When he was on earth, devils trembled before him, and

John v. 19, 20, 23, 26.

Mat. viii. 29. and xiv. 33.

his disciples worship'd him, as the Son of God. And after he went to heaven, he spoke of himself under this title, as *he* (*viz.* the Jehovah of the old testament) *who searcheth the reins and hearts; and will give unto every one according to their works. These things saith the Son of God.* Rev. ii. 18, 23.

These and several other most magnificent ascriptions are made to him under this title. And tho' some of them may be mentioned with a peculiar reference to the discharge of his mediatorial office; yet it is to be observed, that they are things peculiar to Deity; and the highest character under which he is represented, when they are ascribed to him, is *the Son of God.* 'Tis as such that he is capable of them, and has an original right to them. And if this exalted title by which he is spoken of, when these and such like high ascriptions of divine prerogatives are made to him, respects only his mediatorship; this would suggest as if they were all to be resolved into the lofty delegated powers of the Mediator. And then what becomes of his original dignity, which alone in truth can support them? Hence,

(4.) *Other names, that originally belong to his divine nature, are sometimes used, as well as that of the Son of God, with peculiar relation to his being the Messiah.*

Jehovah

Jehovah is an eſſential name of the only true God. *Thou, whoſe name alone is Jehovah, art the moſt high God over all the earth.* Pſal. lxxxiii. 18. And this is apply'd to Chriſt, with reſpect to his office or mediatorſhip. *Surely ſhall one ſay in the Lord* (*Heb.* Jehovah) *have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Iſa. xlv. 24, 25. *In the Lord* (*Heb.* Jehovah) *ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory.* Jer. xxiii. 5. And this is his name whereby he *ſhall be call'd the Lord* (*Heb.* Jehovah) *our righteouſneſs.* How glorious muſt the righteouſneſs be, which the church has in him!

In like manner *the Lord* in the new teſtament, which anſwers to Jehovah in the old, is often denominative of Chriſt in his office-capacity. He is in his original nature Lord of all things, as the God that made them: But he is likewiſe in his mediatorial-capacity in human nature *made both Lord and Chriſt.* Act. ii. 36. And yet he is never ſaid to be *made* the Son of God; which carries this title higher than that, as more peculiarly appropriated to his Deity than that.

Now as theſe titles are, in their firſt and original application to him, denominations of his divine nature; and yet are apply'd to him with reſpect to his being the Meſſiah, why may not *the Son of God* be a denomination of his divine nature, as the ſecond perſon in the Godhead;

tho' it is alſo apply'd to him with reſpect to that office? Or why ſhould his being order'd to be *call'd* the Son of God, with regard to his birth of the virgin, be any more an argument againſt his really being ſo, on the account of his divine ſubſiſtence in the Godhead, than his being order'd to be *call'd* Jehovah, our righteouſneſs, with regard to his everlaſting mediatorial righteouſneſs, is an argument againſt his being really Jehovah, on the account of his divine nature? Who, that owns the divinity of Chriſt, muſt not ſay, that *Jehovah our righteouſneſs* is a title originally founded in his divine nature, and could not be apply'd to him, unleſs he were God? Why then ſhould we not alſo ſay, that *the Son of* God is a title originally founded in his being eternally begotten of the Father, and could not be apply'd to him, with ſuch peculiarity and eminence, unleſs he were ſo begotten of him? Hence,

(5.) *The Son abſolutely, or the Son of God, and the Son of man, are titles of oppoſite ſignification, when apply'd to Chriſt.*

Mat. i. 23. Chriſt is a complex perſon God-man; *Emmanuel; God with us; God manifeſted in the fleſh: He came of the fathers, as concerning the fleſh, who is over all God bleſſed for ever.* And as the *Son of Man* is a denomination of the Meſſiah from his

1 Tim. iii. 16.

Rom. ix. 5.

his inferior nature, to ſhew that he was truly man: So *the Son of God* is a denomination of the ſame Meſſiah from his ſuperior nature, to ſhew that he is as truly God. And the *child born*, mention'd in *Iſa.* ix. 6. ſeems plainly to me to be rather *diſtinguiſh'd* from the *Son given*, than, as ſome have apprehended, to be *exegetical* of it. For otherwiſe the ſonſhip would relate immediately, if not reſtrictively, to the human nature (which I ſuppoſe they will not aſſert) ſince the *child born* apparently doth ſo.

The terms *Man*, and *Son of Man* are us'd promiſcuouſly for each other in their application to Chriſt, as expreſſive of his *human nature.* Hence in his diſcourſe with the *Jews* he ſaid, *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then ſhall ye know that I am he;* and in a following verſe, *Now ye ſeek to kill me, a Man that hath told you the truth.* He was *a Man approv'd of God*; and *of the fruit of* David's *loins, according to the fleſh.* And as at one time it is ſaid, that *God will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that Man, whom he hath ordain'd:* So at another we are told, that *he hath given him authority to execute judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man.*

John viii. 28, 40.

Acts ii. 22, 30.

chap. xvii. 31.

John v. 27.

On the other hand, the terms *God*, the *Word*, and *the Son of God*, are promiſcuouſly

only used for one another in their application to Christ, as expressive of his *Deity*. As the Father said to him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*: So
Heb. i. 5, 8. *to the Son he saith, they throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And as God was
Gal. iv. 4. said to *send forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law;* so *the word*
John i. 14. was said to be *made flesh and dwell among us.* The *Son* is as plainly distinguish'd from that, which was *made of a woman*, in one of these passages, as the *word* is from the *flesh*, which he was made, in the other: And Christ was as truly the *Son*, before he was made of a woman, as he was the *Logos*, or *Word*, before he was made flesh.

Hence the evangelist *John* spoke of Christ as *God*, as *the Word*, and as *the Son of God*, without any mark of distinction, as if some of these appellations belong to his divine nature, and the other to his
John i. 1, 14, 18. mediatorial office. *In the beginning was the Word, — and the Word was God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father.* And *no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

Christ's being in *the bosom of the Father*, seems to be a description of him from

from his eſſential inbeing in the Father, as his Son. Accordingly he ſpeaks of himſelf as the Son, when he ſpeaks of this inbeing, and of the eſſential oneneſs that is between the Father and him, ſaying, *I and my Father are one.* And this is juſt the ſame form of ſpeech as is uſed, when he is call'd the *Logos*, or the *Word*, and is diſtinguiſh'd, as a divine ſubſiſtent, from the Father and Holy Ghoſt. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three are one.* And as in this paſſage Chriſt is diſtinguiſh'd, as a divine perſon, from the Father and Holy Ghoſt, under the character of the *Word*; ſo he is diſtinguiſh'd from them, under the character of the *Son*, in the form of baptiſm, wherein the one God of the Chriſtian religion is ſet out, as the author and object of it, by whoſe authority we are baptiz'd, and to whom we are devoted, as baptiz'd in their *name*.

chap. x. 30.

1 John v. 7.

Matthew xxviii. 19.

Furthermore, as to the terms *God* and *Son of God*, when the *Jews* charg'd Chriſt with blaſphemy, for *making himſelf God*, his defenſe iſſues in an aſſertion, that he was *the Son of God*. John x. 33, — 36. When *Thomas* confeſs'd his faith in him, *ſaying to him, my Lord and my God*; *This was written that we might believe that Jeſus is* not only *the Chriſt*, but

John xx. 28, 31.

but also *the Son of God.* And the apostle *John*'s elaborate proof that *he is the Son of God,* issues in an assertion, that he is *the true God.* 1 *John* v. 5, — 20. Hence,

(6.) *The Son of God is a title most frequently and remarkably used by the apostle* John, *who wrote not so much to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, as that he is God.*

The ancients tell us that * " he wrote his gospel against *Cerinthus,* and the heresy of the *Ebionites,* who held that our Lord was a mere man, and therefore spoke of his divine original. The other evangelists having written the series of our Lord's generation according to the flesh, he wrote a spiritual gospel beginning from the Divinity of Christ. And † very probably in his epistles as well as gospel (which were not wrote long after one another) he had a particular respect to the *heresies* then growing up, namely

* Dr. *Whitby*'s preface to this gospel.

† Dr. *Waterland*'s sermons, *p.* 210, 211. These authors have collected several testimonies to this purpose from *Jerome*, *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, *Irenæus*, and *Tertullian*, and referr'd to *Eusebius*; but have not quoted his words, which stand thus. Ἐικότως δ' ἓν τὴν μβὺ τῆς σαρκὸς τὲ σωτῆρ☉ ἡμῶν γενεαλογίαν, ἅτε Ματθαίῳ καὶ Λουκᾷ περιγραφεῖσαν, ἀποσιωπῆσαι τ Ἰωάννην. τῆς δὲ θεολογίας ἀπάρξασθαι, ὡς ἂν αὐτῷ τῷ ἐκ θείᾳ πνεύματ☉ οἷα κρείττονι παραπεφυλαγμένης. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 3. cap. 24. Τὸν μβύτοι Ἰωάννην ἔφασαν σωιδεῖν ὅτι τὰ σωματικὰ ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις δεδήλωται. περτραπέντα ὑπὸ τῶν γνωρίμων, πνεύματι θεοφορηθέντα, πνευματικὸν ποιῆσαι εὐαγγέλιον. Ibid. Lib. 6. cap. 14.

of

of *Cerinthus*, and the *Ebionites*, who as they denied the Divinity of our Saviour, ſo alſo denied any divine ſonſhip, antecedent to the birth of the virgin."

Now, of all the inſpir'd writers, none ſpoke ſo frequently and remarkably of Chriſt, under the titles of *the Son* and *Son of God*, as this apoſtle. They are darling phraſes with him, he delights much in them, and uſes them above *fifty* times. If therefore theſe were appellations of Chriſt, merely relating to his human nature, or to his mediatorſhip, it did not ſo well ſerve his grand deſign to abound with a ſort of peculiarity, as he did, in the uſe of them. But if they are denominations relating to his original nature as God, nothing could better promote that deſign, and keep up our thoughts to it, than his ſo frequently ſpeaking of him under thoſe names. Hence,

(7.) *The Son of God is a title given to Chriſt, both antecedently to his incarnation, and irreſpectively to his office, or to any works that belong to him as Mediator.*

Agur, ſpeaking of the omnipotence, majeſty, and incomprehenſibleneſs of God, repreſents his name, and his *Son*'s name, as equally unſearchable, *Who hath aſcended up into heaven, or deſcended? Who hath gather'd the winds in his fiſt? Who hath bound up the waters in a garment? Who hath eſtabliſht all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou* Prov. xxx. 4.

can'ſt tell? He ſpeaks of both their names as alike inexplicable, which I conceive is true, not of the name of God, and of Chriſt conſider'd merely as the Meſſiah; but only of both theſe ineffable perſons, Father and Son, conſider'd in their divine nature, and original relation to each other. And he ſpeaks of omnipotent performances in the creation, preſervation, and government of the world, which are common to the Father and Son; but can relate to the Son only as he is a divine perſon, the ſame in nature with the Father, who made the worlds by him, and by whom all things conſiſt.

Heb. i. 2, 3. Hence we are told, that *God hath ſpoken to us by his Son, by whom alſo he made the worlds, and who upholdeth all things by the word of his power.* And at another time he is call'd *the Son, by whom all things were* Col. i. 13, 16, 17. *created, — who is before all things, and by whom all things conſiſt.* Works of nature are likewiſe aſcrib'd to him under the title John v. 17. of *the Son*, when he ſays, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; that is, he and I are, and always have been, co-equal workers in the whole of creation and providence: And *Ver.* 19. *whatever things he* (the Father) *doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe.* Theſe works of nature, at leaſt the works of creation, were perform'd by him, not as the Meſſiah, but as God. And as theſe have no relation to his actings as the Meſſiah; ſo if his title,

the

the Son, relates only to his office, 'tis ſtrange that works of nature ſhould be ſo commonly aſcrib'd to him under this denomination; and that ſome other term expreſſive of the divine nature, ſhould not be uſed on ſuch occaſions, as I don't find they are ſo frequently as this of the Son.

But to draw to a concluſion of this part of our work.

(8.) *This title, the Son of God, is diſtinguiſh'd from the Chriſt, or from the office-conſideration of him.*

Thus we have already ſeen it is diſtinguiſh'd in our text. The apoſtle *preach'd Chriſt, that he is the Son of God.* Thus it is diſtinguiſh'd in the apoſtle *Peter*'s confeſſion of him, when to the queſtions, *Whom do men ſay that I, the Son of Man, am?* and *whom ſay ye that I am?* The anſwers were, *Some ſay thou art* John the Baptiſt, *ſome* Elias, *and others* Jeremiah, *or one of the Prophets. And* Simon Peter *anſwer'd and ſaid, Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the living God. q. d.* "Thou art neither *John the Baptiſt*, nor *Elias*, nor any one of the Prophets; but the very Chriſt: And thou art more than the Son of Man; thou art the Son of God. Thou art God as well as man." Upon this Chriſt pronounc'd him *bleſſed*, in as much as *fleſh and blood had not reveal'd it to him; but his Father, who is in heaven.* And thus the terms are diſtinguiſh'd in the *Eunuch*'s confeſſion of his faith, ſaying, *I believe*

Mat. xvi. 13 -- 16.

Ver. 17.

Acts viii. 37.

believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

In the epistle to the *Hebrews*, the apostle opposes the character of Christ, as a Son, to that of a servant, in the preference he gives to him above *Moses*, saying, Moses *verily was faithful in all his house as a servant. — But Christ, as a Son over his own house.* This carries the notion of his sonship higher than his office. For Christ as Mediator was his Father's servant, *Behold*, says he, *my servant whom I uphold.* If therefore the Son signifies only the Mediator, or is but another name precisely of the same import with that, *son* and *servant* are terms that can't be opposed with just propriety to each other. Tho' the apostle here speaks of the Mediator, yet he speaks of him under a divine character, as the Son of God; or as the God, *that built all things*, as 'tis express'd in the next foregoing verse to these.

Heb. iii. 5, 6.

Isa. xlii. 1.

Heb. iii. 4.

At another time we are told, in opposition to men who were high-priests under the law, that the Son was made an high-priest, and was consecrated to that office by an oath. *For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son*, that is, maketh the Son an high-priest, *who is consecrated for evermore.* The Son is here said to be made an high-priest by the word of the oath. He was the Son before he was made an high-priest: And his sonship

Chap. vii. 28.

ſonſhip is plainly diſtinguiſh'd from his prieſthood, unleſs we will ſay, that he was an high-prieſt, before he was made an high-prieſt.

Once more, it is ſaid of Chriſt, that *tho' he were a Son; yet learned he obedience by the things that he ſuffer'd.* If his being the *Son* denotes only his being the Meſſiah, whoſe office as ſuch was to ſuffer and die for ſinners, there ſeems to be no ſenſe in ſaying, *tho'* he were a Son, he learn'd obedience by ſufferings. For that is, as if the apoſtle ſhould ſay, *Tho'* it was his work as a Son to learn obedience by ſufferings; yet he learn'd obedience by ſufferings. Or *tho'* he was the Meſſiah, yet he did the buſineſs of the Meſſiah. But if his being the Son relates to his eternal Godhead, there is room for a *tho'* and *yet*, the ſenſe runs clear, and there is ſtrength and beauty in the particles. Tho' he was infinitely exalted in himſelf as the Son of God; yet he ſtoop'd ſo infinitely low in his office, as to ſubmit to the moſt trying inſtances of obedience in human nature. Tho' he was the Son of God, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet he humbled himſelf ſo far as to take upon him the form of a ſervant, and in the performance of his mediatorial office in our nature, learn'd obedience by his ſufferings, obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs. Chap. v. 8.

Thus we have gone thro' the conſiderations propos'd to confirm the ſenſe we have given of this title, the Son of God;

and have purposely omitted, or less enlarged upon some things here, which I have formerly had occasion to take notice of in a set of † sermons published on the Godhead of Christ. Let us now proceed to,

II. Add a few words upon the *other* title mentioned in our text, and that is *Christ.*

This is evidently an office-character, which belongs to the Son of God. And as discourses on his office, as Mediator, are the peculiar province of another of my brethren in this collection of sermons, I shall but briefly touch upon it.

The word *Christ* in the *Greek*, answers to *Messiah* in the *Hebrew*, and is of the same import. Thus it is explained, where we are told of *Andrew*'s words, saying, *We* John i. 41. *have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*

The Christ signifies the *Anointed*; and hath a reference to the anointing of the prophets, priests and kings among the Jews. The priests always, and the prophets and kings very often were consecrated to their respective offices by anointing. And as our dear Lord is the great prophet, priest and king of the church, who was prefigur'd by them, that were anointed to those offices under the law; so he, by way of eminence, is the Christ, the anointed of God.

All these offices were united and raised to

† *Jesus Christ God-man*, on *Rom.* ix. 5. p. 175—191.

their

their utmost perfection and glory in him; and his unction exceeded theirs. *He was anointed with the oyl of gladness above his fellows.* By his *fellows* may be meant those that have communion with him in his human nature, office-characters, and benefits. His anointing was superior to that of any of the sons of men, with whom he was partaker of flesh and blood; it was superior to that of the prophets, priests and kings, who had gone before him; and to that of all Christians, who have an unction with him, and from him, and are *made kings and priests to God and his Father*, in a spiritual sense thro' him. Ps. xlv. 7. Rev. i. 6.

He *is fairer than the children of men;* and *grace is poured into his lips.* Or, as the *Chaldee* expounds it,† the spirit of prophecy was given into his lips. The *Jewish* prophets, priests and kings were anointed with material ceremonial oyl. But Christ with more excellent oyl: For *the Spirit of the Lord God was upon him, because the Lord anointed him to preach good tidings to the meek*, &c. Believers receive the Spirit, with his gifts and graces, *according to the measure of the gift of Christ.* But Christ himself receiv'd him without measure. *For God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him.* And *It pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in him*, as *he is the head of the body, the church.* Ps. xlv. 2. Isa. lxi. 1. Eph. iv. 7. John iii. 34. Col. i. 18, 19.

† Vid. Ainsworth in loc.

The anointing upon him was *like the*
Ps. cxxxiii. 2. *precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even* Aaron's *beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.* Hence it was *the oyl of gladness*, so call'd, as some have observ'd, from its effects. It
Ps. xlv. 8. makes *all his garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia*, as it follows in the next verse. It gives them a rich perfume, and diffuses health, vigour and joy, thro' all the members of his mystical body, who derive a holy unction from him. As oyl is an emblem of refreshment; so all spiritual delights come into the souls of believers from the anointing Spirit, who is their Comforter; and all their joy is the joy of the Holy Ghost.

Anointing to office, was a rite anciently used for several purposes. It was used as a signal of God's *choice* to office, as when *David* was chosen from among his brethren,
1 Sam. xvi. 12. *the Lord said, Arise, and anoint him; for this is he.* It was used for *consecration*, as in the case of *Aaron* and his sons, when
Exod. xxviii. 41. God said to *Moses, Thou shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.* It was used for *investiture*, as when God said to *Samuel*, concerning *Saul, Thou*
1 Sam. ix. 16. *shalt anoint him to be captain over my people* Israel, *that he may save my people out of the hands of the* Philistines. And it was used for *qualifications* to discharge the of-
Chap. xiii. 14. fice, as when Samuel *took the horn of oyl, and*

and anointed David *in the midst of his brethren, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward.* Accordingly, our blessed Lord's being anointed, signifies his being chosen and consecrated to, invested in, and qualified for his mediatorial office, which includes all the offices of a prophet, priest and king.

As the anointing relates to his *election* and *consecration* to office, and *investiture* in it, it terminates upon his whole person, God-man. He is God's *elect, in whom his soul delighteth.* He is the *Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* And *when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.* Thus *Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* But as the anointing relates to his *qualifications* or endowments by the Holy Ghost for his office, it terminates immediately, and only on his human nature; with regard to which it is said, that *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him.*

Ps. xlii. 1. Heb. vii. 28. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Heb. v. 5. Acts x. 38.

His divine nature needed no anointing to fit it for the discharge of his office; nor was capable of any such additional assistance for it. But his human nature needed it, and was capable of it. Indeed

Indeed the Son himself could easily have furnished his human nature for all the work to which he was called, by vertue of his personal union with the man Jesus; for
Col. ii. 9. thereby *all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily.* But as the Holy Spirit was to bear his part in the glory of our salvation; and in order thereunto, the human nature of Christ was form'd in the womb
Luke i. 35. of the virgin by the *overshadowing* of his power, which was the *power of the Highest;* it was proper that he should have the glory of enriching that nature which he had formed, with all the gifts and assistances that were necessary for the service for which he had formed it. And as Christ came on his Father's commission, and was sent by him to do his work and will; and he by
Heb. x. 5. the Spirit had *prepared him a body* for that purpose; it was proper that he should give him all furniture by the same Spirit for the work to which he sent him. For *who goes*
1 Cor. ix. 7. *a warfare any time at his own charges?* And in this way of procedure, he gave testimony to Christ's authority, and to his approbation of him in his office, as it hereby
Acts x. 38. appeared that *God was with him.*

This oeconomy of things relating to the Messiah's work, called for the anointing of the Holy Ghost, to qualifie his human nature for it; and therefore the scripture represents it in this manner. And yet, as all the operations of the divine persons *ad extra,*

tra, or out of the divine nature, are common to the Father, Son and Spirit; so what the Father and Spirit did herein, was done by the Son likewise, and his own Divinity shone thro' the man in his office-work. They were all jointly concurrent in it; and the power of the one only Godhead, was the principle of the whole furniture. This distinct way of personal acting in this œconomy, keeps up an evidence of the distinct personality of the Father, Son and Spirit. And this unity of principle in the operation, leads us to conceive of them as one God.

Thus we have gone thro' what might be needful on the *two* characters, by which our blessed Lord is described in our text. A few *practical reflections* shall close this discourse.

REFLECTIONS.

I. *How amazing are the riches of divine love!*

The Son of God himself is become our Saviour. *In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* 1 John iv. 8, 9. The Father's giving his own Son to save us, is a higher instance of love, than if he had given

given all the angels in heaven. To give such a Son, the Son of his own nature and perfections, his only begotten Son, the Son of his dearest love and delights; to give him for us, and to give him up to all the terrors that divine justice, and the powers of darkness could inflict upon him, to redeem us, was as far as his love could go. Because he could give us nothing greater, he gave us his Son; and we may well conclude with the apostle, *He that spared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Rom viii. 32.

And how surprising was the love of this Son of God himself, that he who was the Son in the bosom of the Father, infinitely possess'd of equal perfections, glory and blessedness with him, so that nothing could be added to them, that he should nevertheless wave his prerogative, veil his glory in our nature, and freely become our Saviour! What astonishing wonders of grace are here, that he would make our nature personally his own, and then bleed, and groan, and die, and suffer all indignities and reproaches in that nature for such sinners as we are, for such as were of meaner rank than the angelick host, and for such as had injur'd and provok'd *him*, as well as the Father! How are the praises of his love celebrated in the gospel on this account! *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho' he*

2 Cor. viii. 9.

was

was rich, yet for your ſakes he became poor, that ye thro' his poverty might be made rich. He *being in the form of God, thought it not* Phil. ii. 6, *robbery to be equal with God: But made* 7, 8. *himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.* And *hereby perceive we the love of* 1 John iii. *God, becauſe he laid down his life for us.* 16. With what admiring rapture ſhould we ſtand at the brink of the boundleſs ocean; and behold, embrace, and as far as poſſible *comprehend*, or rather *apprehend*, or *take in* (καταλαβέσθαι) *with all ſaints, what is the breadth,* Epheſ. iii. *and length, and depth, and height; and know* 18, 19. *the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge!*

With what holy amazement and adoring pleaſure ſhould we reflect upon all this! and what a joyful ſong ſhould we raiſe *to him* Rev. i. 5. *that hath loved us, and waſh'd us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father! To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Hence,

II. *What a divine Saviour is Chriſt!*

The *Son of God* is the uſual title of the Meſſiah, to keep up exalted thoughts of him, as *God our Saviour*, as poſſeſs'd of the ſame nature and eſſential perfections with the eternal Father. "In him all his Father ſhone

ſhone ſubſtantially expreſs'd," as * one finely repreſents it. His Divinity ſhone thro' all his office, and gave efficacy to all his ſaving work. It ſheds its radiant luſters thro' the purchaſe, conſtitution, guidance, preſervation, government, and ſalvation of the church. Who but God could be capable of managing and ſecuring all its great concerns for time and eternity; or be worthy to wear the glory due to him for it? Hence,

III. *What a ſufficiency and perfection muſt there be in his ſaving work!*

Had he been only the *Son of Man*, it might have been ſaid, incluſive of him as well as others. *Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſon of man in whom there is no help.* But he is the *Son of God*, as well as the Son of Man, and therefore able for our help; and our hope in him is no leſs than a *hope in the Lord our God.* Nothing can be wanting in his undertakings or performances. Nothing of our own can ever be needful to compleat the merit of his obedience and ſufferings in our room and ſtead; and no defect can be found in his capacity of filling up any part of the important truſt that is repoſed in him.

Pſal. cxlvi. 3.

Ver. 5.

We need no other Mediator between God and us; no other, to renew acquaintance, friendſhip, and correſpondence between the parties, that were ſet at the utmoſt variance

* *Milton's* Paradiſe loſt. *B.* iii. *l.* 139.

by

by sin; no other, to appease God's righteous resentments against us, and to overcome our unrighteous resentments against him; no other, to reconcile him to us, and us to him; no other, to render him accessible to us, or to introduce and recommend us to him, and to give us humble boldness before him; no other, to secure his rights and our happiness, or to obtain the eternal inheritance in a way worthy of God to bestow it, and to prepare us for it, and conduct us safe to the possession of it. Here a soul may safely venture it self and its eternal all without fear of a miscarriage. And if we *know whom we have believed*, we may be well *persuaded, that he is able to keep that which we have committed to him, against the* great *day*. Hence, 2 Tim. i. 12.

IV. *How inexpressible is the happiness of being well affected toward him, and interested in him!*

God so lov'd the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And *he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.* If our hearts are set right toward him by the faith of the operation of God; if our desires are after him, and our faith rests upon him; if we chuse and prefer him to all things else; and yield our-selves up to him, to be sav'd and govern'd by him, we may claim an interest in him: John iii. 16, 36.

And

1 John v. 12. And *he that hath the Son hath life.* He hath begun his saving work upon us; and we may depend upon him for all that is Mat. xii. 20. further needful to complete salvation. *The bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoaking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.* Hear how he John x. 28, 29, 30. himself speaks of his sheep, *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all,* it can't be deny'd but that he must needs be greater than all that can be against them; *and none,* whether men or devils, *are able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* And 'tis as impossible to pluck them out of my hand; for *I and my Father are one.* Their Divinity and power are one: Or they are one God, as the *Jews* understood him to *Ver.* 31, 33. mean, when for this saying, *they took up stones to stone him, — because he made himself God.* Hence,

V. *How great is their danger that despise or neglect the Son of God!*

John iii. 18, 36. *He that believeth not is condemn'd already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* And *he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* There is no help or hope for them that reject him. His infinite dignity, as the Son of God, aggravates their crime; and his almighty pow-

er ſecures the puniſhment. *He that deſpis'd Moſes's law, dy'd without mercy.* —— *Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God?* Heb. x. 28, 29.

How doſt thou, O unbelieving impenitent ſinner, that lieſt out from this glorious Saviour, and throweſt contempt upon him, How doſt thou think thou canſt be excus'd for thy diſregards and affronts to the Son of God? Or how canſt thou hope to eſcape his heavy reſentments? He is as able to puniſh the diſobedient, as to ſave the believing ſinner. O therefore *kiſs the Son leſt he be angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.* Pſal. ii. 12.

The end of the firſt Sermon.

PREACHING CHRIST EXPLAIN'D.

ACTS ix. 20.

And straightway he preach'd Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

SERM. II. preach'd *April* 24, 1729.

IN speaking to these words we have already consider'd the *characters*, that describe the subject of the apostle's ministry; and they are *Christ, the Son of God.* We now proceed to,

Secondly, *Consider his preaching upon this subject.* He preach'd Christ, that he is the Son of God.

What is here recorded concerning the apostle *Paul* is for an example, or for our imitation; as well as for his commendation. It gives us a view of the great design of a gospel-ministry, and lays out the principal argument of the ministerial work in our

days, as well as in his; unless we would preach another gospel than he preach'd. And therefore my design in treating upon it will lie in *two* things, with their *application.* We shall,

I. *Enquire what it is to preach Christ;* or *wherein it consists.* And then,

II. *Offer some considerations to recommend this preaching;* or *to shew why the ministers of the gospel should preach Christ.*

I. *Enquire what it is to preach Christ*; or *wherein preaching Christ consists.*

The nature of our design in the former discourse confin'd our thoughts to the sense of the characters, under which our text speaks of the subject, that the apostle preach'd upon. This would not allow us to take so wide a compass as may be necessary to a just view of what goes into the work of preaching Christ. It may therefore be proper to lay out its *subject* a little more extensively. And then proceed to its *acts.*

1. As to the *subject* of this preaching, it is *Christ.*

And this may be consider'd with greater *latitude*, or *restriction.*

(1.) We may consider preaching Christ in a *latitude* of the expression.

Looking upon it in this view, it takes in the whole compass of Christian religion,

conſider'd in its reference to Chriſt. It extends to all its noble improvements of natural light and principles; and to all its glorious peculiarities of the ſupernatural and incomprehenſible kind, as each of theſe may be one way or other referr'd to him. In this ſenſe there is no doctrine, inſtitution, precept or promiſe; no grace, privilege, or duty toward God or man; no inſtance of faith, love, repentance, worſhip, or obedience, ſuited to the goſpel-ſtate, and to the deſign and obligations of the Chriſtian religion, that don't belong to preaching Chriſt.

But to bring all theſe with any propriety under this denomination, they muſt be conſider'd, according to their reſpective natures or kinds, in their reference to Chriſt, that he may be interwoven with them, and appear to be concern'd in them. They muſt be preach'd, not with the air of a heathen moraliſt or *Platonick* philoſopher; but with the ſpirit of a miniſter of Chriſt, referring them up to him, as reveal'd or enjoin'd or purchas'd by him, as ſhining in their brighteſt luſters, and triumphing in all their glories thro' him, as built upon him, and animated by him, as lodg'd in his hands, *who is head over all things to the church*, as ſtanding in the connections, uſes, and deſigns, in which he hath placed them, as known, enjoy'd, or practis'd by light and grace deriv'd from him, as to be accounted for to him, as acceptable to God, and advantageous to our ſalvation

Eph. i. 22.

ſalvation alone thro' him, by faith in him, as inforc'd upon us by motives and obligations taken from him, and as tending to his glory and the glory of God in him. Whatever is the immediate ſubject of the diſcourſe, it may be call'd preaching Chriſt, if it is manag'd in ſuch a manner as ſhews his concern in it, and leads our thoughts either to the glory of his perſon and offices, or to his kingdom of providence or grace, *as all things were created by him and for him*, as *he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt*, as *he is the head of the body, the church, the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence*, and as *it pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell.* Col. i. 16, —— 19.

In this ſenſe the apoſtles *preach'd the riches of the glory of the myſtery among the Gentiles, which was Chriſt in them, the hope of glory; warning every man and teaching every man in all wiſdom, that they might preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus. Whereunto*, ſays our apoſtle, *I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* They gave an evangelical turn to moral duties; and inforced 'em with a reference to Chriſt, and by conſiderations taken from him. *Ver.* 27, 28, 29.

For a ſpecimen of this you may obſerve the following inſtances of *perſonal* and *relative* duties, as inforc'd by the apoſtle *Paul*. As to the firſt of theſe, he ſays, *Let us walk honeſtly as in the day; not in rioting and* Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

1 Cor. vi. 18, 19, 20. *Flee fornication.— What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Gal. v. 24. 25. *They that are Christ's, have crucify'd the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. This I say therefore and testify in the Lord, that ye walk not as other* Gentiles

Eph. iv. 17, --- 32. *walk in the vanity of their mind. But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be ye have heard him and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renew'd in the spirit of your mind,* &c.

And with regard to *relative* duties, he says, *Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for*

Chap. v. 2, 22 - 33. *Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord,* &c. *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also lov'd the church,*

Chap. vi. 1---9. *and gave himself for it,* &c. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them*

up

up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, &c.

In like manner the apostle *Peter* urges moral duties with Christian arguments, saying, *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. —Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; —— but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath call'd you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* And Christ hath *left us an example that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was revil'd, revil'd not again; when he suffer'd, he threatned not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.* And he exhorts them to add to their *faith, virtue,*

1 Pet. i. 15, 18, 19.

Chap. ii. 9, 21, 22----24.

2 Pet. 5----8.

knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'Twould be to transcribe a great part of the apostolick writings to give you a full view of this strain of preaching Christ; how they intermingled the doctrines that peculiarly relate to him, as inforcing and evangelizing the duties, that have a foundation in natural light. In this latitude of the expression all their sermons and epistles were full of Christ. And after their example, Christ should triumph in all our discourses: His name should throw life and lustre upon all our holy ministrations. But,

(2.) We may consider preaching Christ more *restrictively*.

This may be call'd a more *direct* and *immediate* way of preaching him. And considering it in this light, it relates to the person and mediation of Christ, to the eternal counsels of God's will in him, and to the whole method of divine wisdom and grace in the salvation of sinners by him.

This direct preaching Christ is a noble and extensive province. It includes all that hath been, or that can be said of him, under the characters of *the Son of God*, and *the Christ*. It takes in the adorable constitution of his person, God-man, all the infinite perfections and condescentions of the God,

and all the excellent qualifications, real properties, and ſinleſs infirmities of the man. It takes in his equality with the Father in the divine nature, and ſubordination to him in the human nature and office-capacity; his perſonal and his relative glories, and the manifeſtation of the glory of all God's attributes in their utmoſt and harmonious ſplendors thro' him.

It takes in his peculiar and intire fitneſs for the redemption of the church; his Father's appointing him to it, and his own free acceptance of it, and engagements in eternal tranſactions with the Father about it; the viſible appearances he made, as the Jehovah of *Iſrael* under the old teſtament; the promiſes and propheſies, types and figures, that were anciently given of him, and his coming in the fulneſs of time to anſwer them; his incarnation, life, obedience, ſufferings, and death, in a humble ſtate upon earth, to make an atonement for ſin, and fulfil all righteouſneſs; and his reſurrection, aſcenſion and exaltation in all his glory at the Father's right hand in heaven, to apply and ſecure the merit of his blood.

It takes in all his royalties and advocacy, as a *prieſt upon his throne*; his dominion over all, and his peculiar headſhip to the church, his love to them and care of them, his appearing in the preſence of God for them, and ſending his Spirit, to guide, ſanctify, comfort and preſerve them; and his coming

coming to raiſe the dead, and judge the world at the laſt day.

It further takes in all his offices, names, titles, and relations; the tenor, ſettlement, and confirmation of the covenant of grace in him; the way of obtaining forgiveneſs of ſins, juſtification, and adoption, acceſs to God, acceptance and communion with God thro' faith in him; all the gracious influences and aſſiſtances he promiſes, and communicates in the way of his own appointment; together with all the other benefits he hath purchas'd and beſtows, all the obligations he hath laid upon us, and all the high and ſacred regards of duty, gratitude, love and praiſe that he deſerves and demands from us, in a life of faith in him, and holy obedience to him here, till he ſhall receive us to himſelf, to live with him in glory for ever.

This is preaching Chriſt *directly*, and in the *reſtrictive* ſenſe. And it is evident to an attentive mind, that 'tis this ſort of *direct* preaching him, that is intended in our text, and in moſt of thoſe other parts of the new teſtament, where the miniſtry of the goſpel is characterized by it.

Thus, in our text it is call'd the apoſtle's *preaching Chriſt, that he is the Son of God*; and a little lower, his *proving that this* Son of God *is very Chriſt*, or the only true Meſſiah that was to come. At other times it is called *preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt, who is Lord of all, whom God anointed with*

Acts ix. 22. Chap. x. 36, 38-43.

with the Holy Ghost, who was slain and hanged on a tree, whom God raised up the third day; commanding his witnesses to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that thro' his name, whosoever believes in him, shall receive remission of sins. They preached Christ crucified, to 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *the* Jews *a stumbling block, and to the* Greeks *foolishness; but to them that are call'd, both* Jews *and* Greeks, *Christ the power of God,* Acts iv. 2. 11, 12. *and the wisdom of God.* And they *preached thro' Jesus the resurrection from the dead; and that he is become the head of the corner: neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

Philip's text shews, that his preaching Christ to the *Eunuch*, was in the restrictive strain. *The place of scripture which* the Eunuch *read, was this, He was led as a* Chap. viii. 32--35. *sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. Then* Philip *opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* And who can doubt, but that the men of *Cyprus* and *Cyrene* made Christ the peculiar subject of their ministry, when *they spake to* Acts xi. 20, 21. *the* Grecians, *preaching the Lord Jesus, and*

the

the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord?

All the preaching of the apoſtles, recorded in the hiſtory of their acts, ran in this reſtrictive way of preaching Chriſt, as you may eaſily obſerve at your leiſure. And the apoſtle *Paul* having ſpoken of him, as the

1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. *one mediator between God and man, who gave himſelf a ranſom for all, to be teſtified in due time*; that is, either for all ranks and degrees of men, mention'd in the foregoing verſes, or for *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*,

Verſe 7. mentioned in the following verſe, he there immediately adds, *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apoſtle, (I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt and lie not) a teacher of the* Gentiles *in faith and verity.*

Thus we have conſider'd this preaching, with regard to its *ſubject*. We now,

2. Proceed to its *acts*, and theſe may be reduced to the *three* following heads.

(1.) It is to *publiſh* or *declare* theſe things concerning Chriſt.

This is the proper ſenſe of the word [κηρύσσω] in our text. It was commonly uſed among the *Greeks*, to expreſs a proclamation or declaration of things by a publick officer. Accordingly Chriſt ſent his

Mark xvi. 15. diſciples to *go into all the world, and preach* or publiſh *the goſpel to every creature.* They are his heralds, to proclaim him Lord of all; and his ambaſſadors, to preach peace by him.

Hence

Hence the apostles went forth, *declaring unto the people glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.* Acts xiii. 32, 33. Chap. v. 42.

The ministers of Christ are commission'd officers, and are to go forth in his name and authority, to publish all that they find in their bibles concerning him, according to the best of their understandings, just as they find it there. My meaning is, that they are not to bring their own sense to it; but to search out Christ's sense in it, and to declare that to the people. They are to open and keep close to their commission, to withhold nothing that may be profitable concerning Christ, to add nothing of their own to it, and to make no alterations in it, but to set it forth in its own native-simplicity, and inimitable glory. They are to preach him with all boldness, without fear of his and their adversaries; and to endeavour to set every thing concerning him in a clear, consistent, easy light, that, if possible, none might mistake, but all that hear might understand them.

They are to explain the things of Christ, as far as they find them explicable, to lay things together that may strike the best light upon one another, to expatiate upon the great and copious subject, insisting most upon

upon the most important things relating to it, by all the variety of useful representations it is capable of, and to draw out its deep and hidden glories, that they may be exposed with perspicuity and enlargement to open view. And they are to publish all the incomprehensible mysteries of Christ, just as far as he hath reveal'd them, without attempting to explain them any farther than his own word has cast a light upon them.

This is preaching Christ, as to the declaration that is to be made of him, or publication of the things that concern him. Hence,

(2.) It is to *confirm* and *defend* what is published concerning him.

Phil. i. 7, 17. The apostle was *set for the defence and confirmation of the gospel. He preached Christ, that he is the Son of God; and confounded the* Jews *which dwelt at* Damascus, Acts ix. 22. *proving that this is the very Christ. He* Chap. xvii. 2, 3. *reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus whom he preached unto them is Christ.* He sent *Timotheus* to the 1 Thess. iii. 2. Christians at *Thessalonica, to establish them, and to comfort them concerning their faith.* Acts xiv. 21, 22. And he went with *Barnabas* to *Lystra, Iconium* and *Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith.*

The

The ministers of Christ are to *hold fast the faithful word, as they have been taught,* (or *according to the doctrine* they have received from Christ, κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν) *that they may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.* They are to maintain and support what they preach concerning Christ, by the light and authority of his word, by comparing scripture with scripture, and by just reasonings upon them, and clear deductions from them, as far as the nature of things will bear; and in this way, *earnestly to contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints.* Tit. i. 9. Jude 3.

There are difficulties to be solv'd, objections to be answer'd, seeming contradictions to be reconcil'd, and incomprehensibles to be contended for as reasonable to be received, on the account of the sublimity of their own nature, and on the foot of a divine testimony. Obstinate, artful, captious, and profane gainsayers, are to be reproved, convinced, or silenced; tender consciences, and doubting souls to be assisted, relieved and settled; honest enquirers to be satisfied; and believers to be establish'd concerning the faith of Christ. All truths relating to him are to be prov'd upon solid scriptural principles, that they may maintain their ground to the honour of Christ, to the rebuke and confutation of his enemies, and to the *furtherance and joy of faith,* in all those that *love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.*

All

All this belongs to this branch of preaching Christ. Hence.

(3.) It is to *propose* and *recommend him to the acceptance* of those to whom he is preach'd.

The word in our text carries such a sense of preaching, as consists in proclaiming publick edicts and commands, and in inviting slaves and captives to come in to a deliverer for their liberty, and in ordering things to be disposed of to the people. It was frequently used among the ancients, to express these sorts of publications †.

In this view of the word, we may consider it as transferr'd to the use of preaching the gospel, in which the ministers of Christ go forth in his name, proclaiming him to the people, proposing liberty to captives, and inviting sinners to come in to him for all salvation. Their business is, among other

† Ἦλθον ὃ πρὸς μὲ καὶ, χρημάτων ταμίαι οἵ τε τῶ Ασσυρίων βασιλέως καὶ ἄλλων δυναςῶν, οἳ ἔλεγον ὅτι χρυσίον εἴη παρὰ σφίσιν ἐπίσημον, δασμὸς τίνας λέγοντες; κ) ταῦτα ὅτω κηρύττετε πάντα ἀποφέρειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ὅπε ἂν καθίζησθε.—ὑμεῖς δὲ λαβόντες διαδίδοτε—ἵνα ἔχητε ἢν τίνος προσδέησθε, καὶ ὅτε ὠνήσεσθε. τὴν δ' ἀγορὰν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν τῷ ςρατοπέδῳ κηρύξατε μὲν ἤδη, ἔφη, μὴ ἀδικεῖν μηδένα, πολεῖν δὲ τοὺς καπήλες καὶ ἐμπόρες ὃ, τι ἔχειν ἕκασος πράσιμον· καὶ ταῦτα διαθεμένους ἄλλα ἄγειν, ὅπως οἰκῆται ἡμῶν τὸ ςρατόπεδον· καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐυθὺς ἐκήρυτ[τ]ον· Xenoph. de Cyr. Instit. Lib. 4. Sect. 22.

Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κῦρος ἀνειπεῖν ἐκέλευσεν, εἴ τις εἴη ἐν τῷ Ασσυρίων—ςρατεύματι ἀνὴρ δοῦλος, ἢ Μήδων, ἢ Περσῶν—ἢ ἄλλοθεν ποθὲν ἐλευθερωθήνω, ἐκφαίνεσθαι· οἱ δ' ἀκούσαντες τοῦ κηρύγματος (γρ. κήρυκος) ἄσμενοι πολλοὶ προσεφάνησαν. (π. προεφάνησαν) ὁ δ' ἐκλεξάμενος αὐτῶν τοὺς τὰ εἴδη καλλίςες, ἔλεγεν ὅτι ἐλευθέρους αὐτοὺς ὄντας δεήσει ὅπλα ἀποφέρειν ἃ ἂν αὐτοῖς δίδωσι· τὰ δ' ἐπιτήδεια ὅπως ἂν ἔχωσιν ἔφη αὐτῷ μελήσειν, &c. Ibid. Sect. 23.

things

things, to declare that *this is the command of God, that they should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*; and to propose him to their acceptance, that they, by divine grace, may be brought to *believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, they may have life thro' his name.* 1 John iii, 31. John xx. 21.

Thus our apostle preach'd Christ, saying, in an address to the *Jews*, *To you is the word of this salvation sent. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that thro' this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of* Moses. *Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.* He herein recommended and offered Christ to them, with a solemn caution against rejecting him. *And when the* Jews *were gone out of the synagogue, the* Gentiles *besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath*; i. e. That they might have the like offer of Christ to them, as had been made to the *Jews*. Their request was granted; and God own'd it with glorious success. *The next sabbath-day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.* —*Then* Paul *and* Barnabas *waxed bold, and said to the* Jews, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you and judge your selves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the* Acts xiii. 26, 38--41. Verse 42. Ver 44, 46, 47, 48.

Gentiles. *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the* Gentiles, *that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the* Gentiles *heard this, they were glad, and glorify'd the word of the Lord: And as many as were ordain'd to eternal life believ'd.*

1 Tim. i. 15. The apostle publish'd *this*, as *a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom* he reckon'd himself *chief.* And he spoke of himself, and other ministers of Christ, as *persuading men;* as having *the word of reconciliation committed to them;* and as *ambassadors for Christ, as tho' God did beseech by them, praying them in Christ's stead,* and using many engaging arguments with them, *to be reconciled to God.* And he goes on to *beseech the* Corinthians *not to receive the grace of God,* meaning the gospel of his grace, *in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succour'd thee: Behold, now is the accepted time: Behold, now is the day of salvation.* Hence,

2 Cor. v. 11, 18---- 21 *and* vi. 1, 2.

At other times he speaks of the ministry, as *given for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That —— we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

Eph. iv. 12, 13, 15.

Accord-

According to this method of the apostle's preaching Christ, he is to be propos'd and recommended to *sinners*, and to *believers*.

[1] *To sinners.*

Christ is *set forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood.* And he is to be preach'd to all sorts and degrees of sinners as such. He is to be recommended to them in all his glorious and endearing characters; as the Son of God and Saviour of sinners; as God-man-mediator; as a prophet, priest and king, indispensably necessary for them, every way suitable to their wants, and altogether worthy of their acceptance; as an able, faithful and willing Saviour; as the best that could be provided, or that can be desir'd; and as bringing in a complete and everlasting salvation from sin and wrath, from all the evils they feel, or fear, or are expos'd to, and unto all the blessedness and glory they are, or ever can be capable of in soul and body world without end. Rom. iii. 25.

He is to be recommended to them as chosen, appointed, and accepted of God to be a Saviour; as having in his great love to sinners freely taken upon him a saving-office, and as having gone thro' a humble state of obedience, sufferings and death in their nature, and in their room and stead, that he might effectually save them. He is to be recommended to them as living in heaven to employ himself in his saving-office; as delighting that sinners should employ,

receive, try and trust him in it; and as resolv'd to pursue it, and not to bear his gracious office in vain. For *he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days* in them, *and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfy'd: By his knowledge shall he justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

Isa. liii. 10, 11.

He is to be preach'd as the free gift of God to sinners; and as a Saviour that hath grace enough in his heart, not only to invite them to himself, but likewise to enable them to come at his invitation and call, and to receive all that come to him. Hence he says, *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* And *turn you at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Here are *two* promises to *one* call, to encourage the sinner's hopes, that Christ will make it effectual. And if any, under an affecting sense of their own wants and unworthiness, and with an intire dependence on his power and grace, are brought seriously and heartily to *ask of him, he will give them living water.*

John vi. 37.

Prov. i. 23.

John iv. 10

Under these recommendations of Christ, he is to be freely set forth or propos'd to them for salvation, as the brazen serpent was to the *Israelites* for healing. For *as* Moses *lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must*

must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. And they are to be invited to come to him, under a promise of rest, and of rich supply, upon their coming, as he hath propos'd himself to them, saying, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* And *if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* Chap. iii. 14, 15. Mat. xi. 28. John vii. 37, 38.

John the Baptist preach'd the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand. Our blessed Lord began his ministry in the same way, as suitable to the introduction of the gospel-state, *Mat.* iv. 17. And he went *preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfill'd, and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye and believe the gospel.* He order'd his disciples to go out in his name, first to the *Jews*, and say unto them, *Come, for all things are now ready*; and afterwards to the *Gentiles*, and by all persuasive gospel-arguments to *compel them to come in, that his house might be fill'd.* Mark i. 4. *with* Mat. iii. 2. Mark i. 14, 15. Luke xiv 17, 23.

Accordingly the apostle *Peter* preach'd to the *Jews*, saying, *Repent, and be baptiz'd every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive* Acts ii. 38.

the gift of the Holy Ghost. And at another time he said, *Those things which God before had shew'd by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfill'd. Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.* The apostle *Paul* likewise said to the jailor, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be sav'd. He testify'd to the* Jews, *and also to the* Greeks, *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. He went into the synagogue at* Ephesus, *disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. He expounded and testified the kingdom of God to them that came to him into his lodging at* Rome, *persuading them concerning Jesus.* And when he went among the *Gentiles*, he preach'd, that *now God commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordain'd; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath rais'd him from the dead.*

Chap. iii. 18, 19.

Chap. xvi. 31.

Chap. xx. 21.

Chap. xix. 8.

Chap. xxviii. 23.

Chap. xvii. 30, 31.

All this is answerable to the invitations, pleas, and promises used in the prophet, saying, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat: yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that*

Isa. lv. 1, 3, 6, 7.

that which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight it ſelf in fatneſs. Incline your ear, and come unto me: Hear, and your ſoul ſhall live, and I will make an everlaſting covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David. — Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. And the language of all this ſhuts up the canon of the new teſtament, which cloſes with this gracious call, *The Spirit and the bride ſay come. And let him that heareth ſay, come. And let him that is athirſt, come. And whoſoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Rev. xxii. 17.

This preaching Chriſt is to be directed in the miniſterial way to all people, where the goſpel comes. They are the objects of it; they are nearly concern'd in it; and it hath to do with them promiſcuouſly and indefinitely; none knowing who are God's elect among them, till the event declares it. Hence ſays the apoſtle, *He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtify that it is he, which was ordain'd of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witneſs, that thro' his name, whoſoever believes in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins. While* Peter *yet ſpake* Acts x. 42, 43, 44.

these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

All sorts of rational, scriptural, evangelical arguments are to be used with sinners, to accept of Christ, and yield themselves up to him for all salvation, with an eye to, and hope in Christ to set them home by his Spirit upon their hearts. They are to be treated not like brutes or machines, but like men of rational faculties, capable of attending to, and considering what is propos'd to them; and capable of being wrought upon by the Spirit of God, in a way suitable to their reasonable natures, and of being *drawn*, under his gracious influence, *with cords of a man, with bands of love*. Hence says God by the prophet, *Remember this, and shew yourselves men: Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors*. And at another time the prophet complains, *There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee*. And our Lord said to the *Jews*, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you*.

Hos. xi. 4.

Isa. xlvi. 8.

Chap. lxiv. 7.

John vi. 27.

The stupid careless minds of sinners are to be rouz'd by proper considerations, for convincing them of their need of Christ, and bringing them home to him. They are to be expostulated with, intreated and persuaded, in the bowels of compassion, to embrace him, as he is freely offer'd to them

them in the goſpel. They are to be dealt with by all the arguments of authority and grace, of duty and intereſt, of danger and ſafety, of gain and loſs, of honour and diſgrace, of pleaſure and pain, of eternal happineſs in receiving him, and of eternal miſery for rejecting him.

All arguments are to be uſed with them, ſuited and appointed of God to work upon their judgments and conſciences, their underſtandings, wills, and affections; ſuited to their deſires and averſions, their joys and ſorrows, hopes and fears. They are to be warn'd hereby to flee from the wrath to come, and encourag'd, under a ſenſe of their guilt and danger, to flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope, that in Chriſt is ſet before them.

This is the ordinance of God, and is to be uſed and attended to as ſuch, with expectation of his bleſſing upon it. All theſe methods of addreſs to ſinners, are only means of his appointment to be uſed in ſubordination to his gracious operation and influence. Unleſs his Spirit ſets in with them, all will prove to no ſaving purpoſe; and we ſhall have ſad occaſion for the prophet's lamentation, *Who hath believed our report?* Iſa. liii. 1. *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* And therefore in all this, ſinners are to be directed to Chriſt for all aſſiſtance and ſucceſs. The ſprings of their help and hope are to be open'd, as they lie in him, that

that they may not run, and we may not preach in vain.

Christ is likewise to be recommended and propos'd in our preaching,

[2.] *To believers.*

Acts xviii. 27. They are to be *help'd, who have believ'd thro' grace.* Christ is to be preach'd to them for their farther acceptance of him, and devotedness to him. They are to be Acts xi. 23. *exhorted to cleave with purpose of heart to* Col. ii. 6, 7. *the Lord;* and *as they have receiv'd Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him: rooted and built up in him, and establish'd in the faith, as they have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* And he is to be 1 John i. 3, 4. recommended to them, that they may *have fellowship with him, and with the Father* 2 Cor. i. 24. thro' him, and *that their joy may be full.* We have no *dominion over their faith, but are to be helpers of their joy.*

All his glories, as far as we can discover them, are to be open'd before them. What he is in his wondrous person, office, and love: What he has undertaken and engag'd on their behalf from eternity, and perform'd in time: What he has done and suffer'd for them on earth, and is doing for them in heaven, and will do for them at the last day, and for ever afterwards: What he has purchas'd, provided, and secur'd in himself for them: What he has already bestow'd upon them and promis'd to them: And what he expects and demands from them:

In a word, all that he is in himſelf and is to them; and all that they are made to be in and by him, and are oblig'd to be to him, ſhould be ſet before them in the moſt clear and copious manner poſſible, to recommend him to them, and to engage them to him. But I need not enlarge here, after what has been already ſaid concerning Chriſt.

All this ſhould be propos'd to them, to encourage their continual and increaſing faith, love, hope and joy, admiration, worſhip, obedience, gratitude and praiſe. All this ſhould be attempted and enforc'd upon them, in the name of Chriſt, and with an expectation of his preſence and bleſſing, that they may know their privileges in him, and their duty toward him; and that their hearts may be comforted, ſtrengthned and animated in his ways, till the whole deſign of his grace toward them ſhall be perfected in their endleſs glory.

Having given this account of what it is to preach Chriſt, we now proceed to

II. *Offer ſome conſiderations to recommend this preaching*; or *to ſhew why the miniſters of the goſpel ſhould preach Chriſt.*

After we have heard what it is to preach Chriſt, one would think it ſufficiently pleads for it ſelf; and that there ſhould be little occaſion for arguments to ſet the governing aim of goſpel-miniſtrations towards him. But he that knows any thing of the ſtate of human

human nature, and observes the turn of the present age, may easily see that something of this kind can't be unseasonable to awaken our attention to it, and to stir up myself and others to keep this point in view. Suffer me therefore humbly to suggest the following considerations for this purpose.

1. *Christ is a subject truly excellent, and every way worthy to be preach'd.*

The things we have heard concerning him deserve our highest regards, and our utmost labour to display, establish and recommend them. There is an infinite dignity in this subject, and we need not be asham'd of it. 'Tis the glory of ministers to be conversant with Christ themselves, and to preach him to others. Our apostle *triumph'd in Christ*, and in the *manifestation of the savour of his knowledge in every place.* However some despis'd, and others stumbled at it, *He preach'd Christ crucify'd; and to them that were call'd, both* Jews *and* Greeks, *Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* And his heart was so intirely in it, that he *determin'd not to know*, or not to make known in his ministrations, *any thing among them, save Jesus Christ, and him crucify'd.*

2 Cor. ii. 14.

1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

Chap. ii. 2.

Christ is the object of angels wonder and adoration. They thought it their honour and delight to proclaim his birth. A chief among them brought the *good tidings of great joy* to our world; and crowds of angels at-

Luke 2. 10, 13, 14.

tended the joyful errand, *Praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.* And ever since they had any notices of the glorious theme, they all turn their enquiring thoughts toward it. They make it their closest study, and their chief delight: *They desire to look into it.* They attended the Lord Christ with triumphant acclamations in his ascension to glory: *Twenty thousand, even thousands of angels were his chariots,* himself being in the midst of 'em, when *he ascended on high.* And they chearfully publish his praises in heaven: They unite their songs with the innumerable multitude of the redeem'd in high ascriptions of *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.*

1 Pet. i. 12. Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. Rev. v. 13.

Shall those exalted spirits, those superior ranks of created minds, shall they think him worthy of their attention and of their praise? And shall not we think it our glory to proclaim and recommend him? We, whose intellectual endowments are so much below theirs; we, who have not such clear and extensive views of God and of his ways, under other considerations of him, as they have; and we, who are more nearly concern'd in Christ and related to him, and have more to do with him, and stand in greater need of him than they; we have so much the higher reasons to glory in him, and to set out his praise. Whar

What can be worthy to be known and preach'd, if Chriſt be not ſo? The glory of all divine perfections ſhines with ſplendors all over amiable in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. Here the chief of God's eternal counſels, and endearing ways of wiſdom and love are opened before us. Here are the utmoſt condeſcentions of God, and advancements of man. Here is the center of union and communion between God and fallen man. Here is the grand medium of all gracious communications from him, and of all holy and comfortable acceſs to him. And here is the foundation of all goſpel-privileges and obligations, of all capacities of duty and enjoyment, of all religious ſervices and delights, of all recovery from the ruins of the fall, and of all rectitude and bleſſedneſs that human nature can be adorn'd with.

His eternal Deity puts a glory upon, and gives efficacy to the whole of his mediation: his mediation is the life and ſoul of all our religion: And our religion takes in all that is honourable to God and human nature, and all that is profitable to our ſelves or others. Here is boundleſs room and ſcope for the wideſt thoughts to expatiate, and for the moſt exalted genius to entertain it ſelf with endleſs pleaſure and advantage. Here is a noble ſubject that can never be exhauſted; and the farther we go into it, the more it approves it ſelf to us, and the higher its glories riſe upon us. O, who would not

wiſh

wish to be employ'd in preaching Christ!

2. *Preaching Christ is peculiarly suited to the gospel-dispensation.*

This is a dispensation appropriated to Christ, and to what concerns him; it is set up by him; it takes its denomination and authority from him; it makes the clearest, the fullest and most explicit discoveries of him, that ever were made known to the sons of men; and he is so nearly interested in it, that in the language of this dispensation, preaching the gospel, and preaching Christ, are convertible terms, or terms of the same import. All its parts center in him; all its doctrines and institutions refer to him, and derive their glory and efficacy from him.

All that was said of Christ in the old testament, is transferred into the new, and is improved with additional enlargement, light and lustre. He is the grand article of the new testament, that runs thro' all the *Evangelists* and *Epistles*, the *Acts*, and the *Revelations*, as their governing argument, and that distinguishes his religion from all others. The sum of the gospel-dispensation is *grace and truth by Jesus Christ*; and John i. 17. our characters, profession, privileges, obligations, hopes and happiness, as *Christians*, all derive from him, and depend upon him.

And shall the ministers of such a dispensation, that is founded on Christ, that is full of Christ, that is design'd and calculated for

for his glory, for the glory of God in him, and for the advancement of his kingdom in the world, shall these ministers neglect to preach Christ, or to publish the gospel of his kingdom? Shall not the distinguishing characteristicks of this dispensation run thro' all their holy ministrations? Was *John* the Baptist greater than all the prophets that had gone before him, because he spoke so much, and so plainly of Christ; and shall gospel-ministers come behind *John*, or be less in the kingdom of God than he? How doth this look as if they did not belong to that kingdom, since our Lord hath said, that *he* Mat. xi. 11. *that is least therein is greater than he!* How incongruous is this to the glorious dispensation we are under! and how unworthy of their character, that pretend to a ministry in his kingdom! Hence,

3. *'Tis the special office of Gospel-ministers to preach Christ.*

They are ministers of Christ to declare him to the people. He hath given them their commission, and authorized them Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 47. to preach his *gospel to every creature*; to *preach repentance and remission of sins in his name*; to baptize into the faith of him; to administer the sacred memorials of his death in remembrance of him, and evidently *to set him forth, as crucified,* in the whole compass of their office.

As they are *stewards of the mysteries of God, ministers of Christ,* his *servants,* and *ambassa-*

ambassadors for him, the gospel of reconciliation by Jesus Christ is *committed to them.* They are intrusted with it; they are bound to preach it; *necessity is laid upon them, yea, wo is unto them, if they preach not the gospel.* 1 Cor. ix. 16.

The gospel they are intrusted with, takes its denomination from Christ, and their preaching that gospel is frequently characteriz'd by preaching Christ. And shall they be unmindful of, or unfaithful to their trust? shall they not act up to their office-character in the discharge of it? How treacherous and injurious is this to Christ! and how dishonourable and dangerous to themselves! If they are not willing to make it their chief business to preach Christ; or if they are asham'd to own and preach him, with what face can they call themselves the ministers of Christ? or how can they expect that he should approve and own them as his servants. Hence,

4. *The most desirable success of the ministry very much depends on preaching Christ.*

His commission, while we keep to it, is attended with his promise, saying, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.* And *where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* The gospel-ministration is the *glorious ministration of the Spirit, that giveth life.* And *we all*, says the apostle of new testament believers, *with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory* Mat. xxviii. 20. & xviii. 20. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 18.

Gal. iii. 2, 13, 14. *to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* The believing *Galatians received the Spirit, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith*; and *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of* Abraham *might come on the* Gentiles *thro' Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit thro' faith.*

The Spirit of Christ loves to breathe in the doctrines of Christ. He comes from Christ, as our exalted head and redeemer; and the very design of his coming is to *glorify him, by receiving of his things, and shewing them to us.* Hence, while the apostle *Peter* was preaching Christ, to *Cornelius* and his friends, that *thro' his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.* And when *the men of* Cyprus *and* Cyrene *spake to the* Grecians, *preaching the Lord Jesus, the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.*

John xvi. 14.

Acts x. 43, 44. & xi. 20, 21.

But why do I mention particular instances? 'tis evident beyond dispute thro' all the *acts of the apostles*, that 'twas the *preaching of Christ*, which was own'd and honour'd of God, with all the glorious and amazing success, among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, recorded there. 'Twas this that made Christians, and built them up in Christ.

This is the great ordinance of God for the conversion of sinners, and edification of

the saints. For *how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* and *the work of the ministry* is for *the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: —and that speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.* Rom. x. 14. Eph iv. 12, 13, 15.

Christ crucified is the power of God; and he has more or less in all ages set his seal to the preaching of him. The number of real converts from sin to God, and the power of practical godliness in heart and life, have usually rose or sunk, in a great proportion to the faithful preaching, or not preaching Christ. Hence the apostle was not *ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God to salvation, to every one that believeth. —For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. Rom. i. 16, 17.

If therefore ministers would not be unconcern'd, whether they study and labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought; whether the hand of the Lord be with them in their ministrations, or no: If they desire to be own'd of God with the best success, they shou'd take his way for it, in preaching Christ. Hence,

5. *The honour of God and of Christian religion are nearly concern'd in preaching Christ.*

His brighteſt glories are diſplay'd and recommended to us in the perſon and mediation of Jeſus Chriſt; and the glory of Chriſtian religion ſtands in him. All its vitals ſpring up and thrive under his influence, as appears from what has been ſaid concerning him. But if his name is not known; if it don't reign and triumph in the diſcourſes that are preach'd and heard, how ſhall this glory of God be ſeen and advanc'd in its moſt indearing and exalted ſtrains? and how ſhall Chriſtian religion ſhine in its proper beauties, and peculiar luſters? and are not theſe tender and important points? ought not the miniſters of Chriſt to be concern'd for them? Hence,

6. Preaching Chriſt is delightful and improving to ones own and others ſouls.

Our apoſtle was much affected with the grace that made him a miniſter, *to preach among the* Gentiles *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.* and wherever Chriſt was preach'd, *he therein did rejoice, and would rejoice.*

Eph. iii. 8. Phil. i. 18.

'Tis the moſt pleaſant work that a miniſter can be imploy'd in, or that others can attend upon, if they have a true reliſh for it. All the great and glorious things of Chriſt, relating to his adorable perſon, riches, condeſcention and love, the glory of the divine perfections, counſel and will in him, and the near concern he has in the whole compaſs of true religion, are delightful advantageous themes to think, and talk, and hear

hear of. They enlarge the minds and hearts that are let into them. They diffuſe a ſacred pleaſure thro' the whole ſoul, and rectify all diſorders within. They raiſe a man's ſpirit above this world, refine his temper, give him the nobleſt views and proſpects, and fill him with a divine tranſport, with all joy and peace in believing, with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. They are the moſt refreſhing and entertaining ſphere that one would wiſh to move in: and the ſoul that lives moſt in the midſt of its light and influence, can't but ſay, Lord, it is good to be here. Once more,

7. *There are but few in our days that preach Chriſt, and but few that regard him.*

The greateſt number of preachers and hearers ſeem contented to lay him aſide, and too many there are among us, that ſet themſelves againſt him. His name is ſeldom heard of in converſation, unleſs in a way of ſtrife and debate; or, which is infinitely worſe, in a way of contempt, reproach and blaſphemy; and I am perſuaded, it never enter'd leſs, than at this day, into our practical godlineſs, into our ſolemn aſſemblies, into our dealings with God, into our dependences on him, expectations from him, and devotedneſs unto him.

The preſent modiſh turn of religion looks, as if we began to think that we have no need of a Mediator, but that all our concerns were to be manag'd with God, as an

abſolute God. The religion of nature makes up the darling topicks of our age; and the religion of Jeſus is valued only for the ſake of that, and only ſo far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that kind of light. All that is *reſtrictively* Chriſtian, or that is peculiar to Chriſt; every thing concerning him, that has not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles, is wav'd, and baniſh'd, and deſpis'd. And even moral duties themſelves, which are eſſential to the very being of Chriſtianity, are uſually harangued upon, without any evangelical turn, or reference to Chriſt, as *fruits of righteouſneſs to the praiſe and glory of God by him.* They are placed in the room of Chriſt, are ſet up independent of him, and are urg'd upon principles and with views, ineffectual to ſecure their practice, and more ſuited to the ſentiments and temper of a heathen, than of thoſe that take the whole of their religion from Chriſt.

How many ſermons may one hear that leave out Chriſt, both name and thing, and that pay no more regard to him, than if we had nothing to do with him? what a melancholy ſymptom, what a threatning omen is this! do we not already feel its diſmal effects in the growth of infidelity, in the rare inſtances of converſion-work, and in the cold, low and withering ſtate of religion among the profeſſors of it, beyond what has

has been known in ſome former days? May not theſe things be chargeable in great meaſure on a prevailing diſuſe of preaching Chriſt? And where will they end, if the diſuſe goes on, and little or nothing concerning him is to be heard among us? How ſhould all the miniſters of Chriſt, that heartily love him, that are concern'd for his honour, and for the honour of religion, as *Chriſtian*, be affected at theſe thoughts! And how ſhould they be excited, by the too general neglect of others, to be ſo much the more frequent, earneſt, and explicite in preaching Chriſt themſelves!

APPLICATION.

Firſt, *Let us hereby judge of the great excellence of a goſpel-miniſtry.*

The Son of God, the only Saviour of ſinners, is its principal ſubject. It diſcovers and recommends him to us for all the great and glorious purpoſes that are of the utmoſt importance, and eternal conſequence. It is worthy of God's appointment, and of our approbation. It is honourable to him, and beneficial to us. It is ſuited to diſplay the glory of all his perfections in beauteous and entire harmony, to give us an amiable view of him, to recover us from all the ruins of our fallen ſtate, and to bring us into a ſtate of communion with him and conformity to him.

It is full of dignity and delight, ſuperior to all other ways of intercourſe between God and us. It gives us a nobler entertainment than if all the myſteries of nature and art were unfolded to our minds. And it is a better treaſure, than all the gold of the *Indies*, than all the riches of the creation. No ſyſtem of natural principles, no ſchemes of men, no other inſtitution of God could ever match it, or be once compar'd with it, and with the things concern'd in it.

God hath put the higheſt honour upon it; he owns and ſucceeds it. And however others may deſpiſe it, his ſervants ſhould magnify their office, and take pleaſure in it. And all that hear them preaching Chriſt, ſhould know that the kingdom of God is brought nigh unto them.

Secondly, *Let the grace, that hath appointed Chriſt to be preach'd, affect your hearts, for whoſe ſakes it hath made that appointment.*

This excellent miniſtry is not principally appointed for their ſakes, who are employ'd in it, or barely to put an honour upon them; but for the ſake of others, for their conſolation and ſalvation, even *for the elect's ſakes, that they may obtain the ſalvation which is in Chriſt Jeſus, with eternal glory.* The miniſters of Chriſt are ſent to *preach not themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and themſelves the churches, ſervants for Jeſus's ſake.* They are *miniſters by whom ye believes,*

2 Tim. ii. 10.

2 Cor. iv. 5.

1 Cor. iii. 5, 21, 22. 23.

lieve, even as the Lord gives to every man. And *all things are yours*; *whether* Paul, *or* Apollos, *or* Cephas — *all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* All their gifts and labours are for the church; and all their ministry is for its edification, establishment, and increase.

God might have sent messengers of wrath and executioners of justice, to clear the stage of a guilty world. But he hath sent messengers of peace and reconciliation to preach Christ to you, and to open a door of salvation before you in him, to *bring good tidings of good, to publish salvation, and to say unto Zion, thy God reigneth.* He holds out the golden scepter in a gospel-ministry, that you may present your petitions, with faith in the name of Christ, for all the blessings of his kingdom. And there is yet room for the most unworthy hell-deserving sinner to make his request with hope of finding acceptance, and to put in for mercy thro' Jesus Christ to eternal life, *whosoever will, may come and take the water of life freely.* And *him that comes unto Christ*, upon the call of the gospel, *he will in no wise cast out.*

Isa. lii. 7.

Rev. xxii. 17.

John vi. 37.

What a merciful dispensation is this! How full of bounteous and endearing grace, beyond all that ever could have been imagin'd, if God himself had not reveal'd it, and beyond all that has ever been made known by any other means to the sinful

ſons of men! How worthy is this of all acceptation! How ſhould we admire it! How ſhould we be affected with it! And what thankſgivings are due to God on this account!

Thirdly, *Let it be your great concern to uſe and improve the preaching of Chriſt.*

If miniſters are to preach Chriſt, the people are to hear him preach'd; the work is relative, and the duty of one infers the duty of the other. And where Chriſt is moſt and beſt preach'd in all his characters, and in the various and extenſive influence he hath upon the whole of our religion, holineſs and happineſs, that's the beſt preaching, and there it's beſt to hear.

Attend therefore upon the preaching of Chriſt, that you may hear and your ſouls may live; that the great ends for which he is to be preach'd may be anſwer'd by his grace upon you; that you may know, and believe in him, and yield up your ſelves to him; that you may receive a whole Chriſt, his perſon and all his offices for yourſelves, and for all the purpoſes for which you need him; and may have your whole ſouls engag'd to him in all that worſhip, homage, and love, duty and ſervice, that you ought to pay him; that you may give him an entertainment worthy of him, may cleave with full purpoſe of heart to him, and may *adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things.* *For* the goſpel of *the grace of God that brings*

Tit. ii. 10--14.

brings salvation, hath appear'd, in the preaching of Christ, *to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and*, or even, *our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

When Christ is preach'd, 'tis at thy utmost peril, O sinner! to neglect or despise him. For *there is salvation in no other, and there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby thou must be sav'd.* And *how shalt thou escape if thou neglectest so great salvation? Beware therefore*, when thou heareſt of Christ, *lest that come upon thee which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.* It had been better for thee never to have heard of Christ, than to hear of him, and to lie out from him and reject him. For *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* And *'twill be more tolerable for* Tyre *and* Sidon *at the day of judgment than for thee.* Every discovery of Christ in the gospel, which thou hast shut thine eyes against, and every offer of Christ which thou hast refus'd will add a sting to thy guilt, and aggravate thy condemnation in that awful day.

Acts iv. 12. Heb. ii. 3. Acts xiii. 40, 41. John iii. 19. Mat. xi. 22.

But,

Rev. iii. 20. But, *behold he ſtands at the door, and knocks:* He doth this by the miniſtry of the goſpel, and by the Spirit of light and grace that accompanies it: And he ſays, *If any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him and he with me. i. e.* I will give him kind, free, and friendly entertainment. If thy heart is open'd to receive that Jeſus whom we preach, he will enter with all his ſalvation. If thou art willing to be ſav'd by him in the way of the goſpel, as he is preach'd to thee there, thou may'ſt ſecurely depend upon his grace and faithfulneſs, that he will not reject thee. Happy, for ever happy will it be for thee, that thou ever heard'ſt of Chriſt: His word being mixt with faith will profit thee to eternal life. It will be the goſpel of thine own ſalvation, and thou wilt bring forth fruit to his glory, and to thine own account.

Thy eternal all is concern'd in the uſe thou makeſt of Chriſt. If thou receiveſt him as he is propos'd to thee in the goſpel, thou art ſafe and happy: But if thou rejecteſt him, thou art loſt for ever. For a concluſion of all, conſider what himſelf hath ſaid. *Bleſſed is the man that heareth me,* Prov. viii. 34---36. *watching daily at my gates, waiting at the poſts of my doors. For whoſo findeth me, findeth life, and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul; all they that hate me, love death.*

FINIS.

CHRIST's Incarnation, and the Fulneſs of his Grace and Truth:

Conſider'd in two

SERMONS

On JOHN i. 14.

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By *EDWARD GODWIN.*

CHRIST's INCARNATION, AND THE Fulneſs of his GRACE and TRUTH.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of Grace and Truth.

THE apoſtle *Peter* ſpeaking of the ineſtimable favours we have receiv'd from Chriſt, tells us, that he has conferr'd them on us, *that we ſhould ſhew forth the praiſes* (or as the word [ἀρετὰς] does rather ſignify, *the virtues*) *of him who hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.* Now in the words that I have read, we have repreſented to us, the mighty love the Son of God has ſhewn us, the

SERM. I. preach'd *Octob.* 25, 1728. 1 Pet. ii. 9.

the amazing condescension of infinite greatness, the unspeakable grace of offended goodness. The glorious mystery, that *kings* and *prophets* have desir'd to see, and that the highest *angels* love to pry into, *the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,* is here reveal'd unto us. Here we have a way discover'd for God's displaying of the riches of his grace, without any prejudice to the rights of justice: *Mercy and truth* may here be seen to *meet together;* and *righteousness and peace have kiss'd each other: Peace and goodwill* are shewn *to men,* and *glory* is ascrib'd *to God on high.* Here the surprising *incarnation* of the Son of God is set before us, that glorious instance of divine grace, whereby he who sat upon the throne of God, came down to dwell on earth; he, *who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:* He who was cloth'd with honour and majesty, *took part of flesh and blood,* (that so he might be capable of dying,) *that thro' death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who thro' fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.* Here we have open'd to us the inexhaustible and all-sufficient treasures, that are prepar'd by Christ, to answer all our wants, to make provision for the pardon of our sins, and furnish us with *grace to help in time*

Psal. lxxxv. 10.

Phil. ii. 6, 7.

Heb. ii. 14, 15.

time of need, to scatter all our doubts and darkness, and to direct us in the way to life and happiness. And therefore now, when we have such an instance of the love of Christ discover'd to us, when we have the fulness of his *grace and truth* display'd before us, it surely must be proper for us, in a peculiar manner, *to shew forth the virtues,* to publish and declare the grace and love of him who thus has condescended *to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* Heb. ii. 17.

This, in particular, was the great design of founding of this lecture, to celebrate the praises, and *to shew forth the virtues* of our dear Redeemer; displaying of his glorious excellencies, and making known the wonders of his love; declaring what he has done for our salvation, and shewing the sufficiency and fulness of his grace, for the confirming of our faith and hope, for the inflaming of our love to Christ, and for engaging souls to come to him as *full of grace and truth.*

And this it is that I shall now attempt, turning your thoughts, (according as the subject leads me,) to meditate upon the glory and the grace, the majesty and the condescension, of him who left his throne in heaven, and put on mortal flesh, that he might die to save us. And to this purpose

we shall set before you, what the beloved disciple has here told us of his Lord and Master; declaring, that *the Word was made flesh;* that he *dwelt among* men, and they *beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;* and that he was *full of grace and truth.* And following the order of the words, we shall consider,

I. The glorious mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, as it is here asserted by the apostle, when he tells us, that *the Word was made flesh.*

II. The evidence we have of this, in that he *dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* And,

III. The happy fruit and the advantage of it, in that hereby we have a Saviour that is *full of grace and truth.*

And these, as they are considerations of the greatest moment and importance to us, so we shall find that they abound in matter for a practical improvement.

I. What we are first of all to speak to, is the surprizing mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, as it is here asserted by the apostle, when he says, that *the Word was made flesh.* And here it is, we have
Col. i. 26. the *mystery made manifest that had been hid from*

from ages, and from generations; of which the prophets had enquir'd and search'd diligently; and *which the angels had desir'd to look into.* We have here the wonderful event, that ever since the fall had been the longing expectation of the righteous, that was the subject of so many prophecies, and that was pointed out by so many types and figures under the law. We have here the ground of the glad tidings of the gospel, the only sure foundation of the believer's hope and joy. This is a subject therefore, that deserves the study, and calls for the attention and regard of every soul among us. And in the opening of it, we shall consider, 1 Pet. i. 10, 12.

First, Who is *the Word* that is here spoken of? And,

Secondly, What is implied in his being *made Flesh?*

First, Who is *the Word* that is here spoken of? The evangelist has told us this, in the beginning of his gospel: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Where it appears, that by this *Word,* we are not to understand, a word that forms a part of a discourse, an oracle, or voice emitted from the mouth of God, or by his order utter'd John i. 1, 2, 3.

by his servants; but that it signifies essential wisdom and uncreated light; the source and origin of all that is reveal'd to men, the cause and spring of all the universe, of all the beauty that we see, of all the order we so much admire. Wherefore the evangelist goes on to tell us, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men; this was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

Ver. 4, 9.

And thus 'tis easy to perceive, that by *the Word*, the apostle means our Saviour *Christ*, the second person of the glorious Trinity; whom he has spoken of under this character in other places of his writings; as where he says, *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*; and again, in the *Revelations*, where he is plainly speaking of our Saviour, he tells us, that *his name is call'd, The Word of God.* And this was frequently a title that was given to the *Messiah* by the *Jews*, who was well known among them under the character of *Memra*, or *the Word* of God; as it is evident from many places of the *Chaldee Paraphrase*. Nor is it an improper term for the expressing of the Son of God, not only as he is the scope and subject of the prophetical and promissory word; but more especially as 'tis his office to reveal the Father to us, and to make known his mind and will: Which the apostle seems particularly to have had in view, by

1 John v. 7.

Rev. xix. 13.

by what he tells in a few verſes afterwards; *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father he hath declared him.* Ver. 18.

And may we not ſuppoſe, that the apoſtle here alludes to what is ſaid of *the Wiſdom* of God in the book of Proverbs? *The Lord poſſeſs'd me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was: When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water: Before the mountains were ſettled, before the hills was I brought forth: — When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he ſet a compaſs upon the face of the depth: — When he gave to the ſea his decree: —— When he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.* Prov. viii. 22, &c.

Theſe, it is true, are lofty and ſublime expreſſions, and plainly are attended with the characters of an eternal Deity: But we have no need to be ſurpriz'd at this; for ſurely nothing can be ſaid too grand, or too magnificent, of him who is *the Wiſdom* and *the Word* of God, *who was with God in the beginning, and who* himſelf *is* properly and truly *God.*

And now, as it is evident, that by *the Word* the apoſtle muſt be underſtood to mean

our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo when he tells us, that *the Word is God*, there is nothing can be more abſurd, than to ſuppoſe he means a *God* in an inferior ſenſe, a *God* by *office*, not by *nature*, who cannot properly be called *God*. This would be found, not only to contradict the general ſenſe, wherein the word *God* is uſed in ſcripture, but even to contradict the ſenſe that he has uſed it in himſelf, immediately before, even in that very verſe. *The Word was with God*; there all acknowledge, that the title *God* ſignifies him who truly and properly is ſo; and therefore when he adds, *and the Word was God*, the apoſtle muſt either underſtand the ſame *God* as to eſſence, tho' he is diſtinct in perſon, or elſe muſt leave all Chriſtians liable to a great and dangerous miſtake, by an unaccountable ambiguity in his words. And tho' it be alledg'd the article is wanting here to the word Θεὸς *God*, where 'tis applied to *Chriſt*, yet this is far from proving that we ſhould underſtand it therefore in a lower ſenſe; for the ſame word is us'd without an article in ſeveral other places of this very chapter, where it does plainly ſignify the *one true God*. And when the name of *God* is uſed in all the other places in its proper ſenſe, can it be reaſonable to ſuppoſe that we ſhould underſtand it otherwiſe, here in this ſingle inſtance?

Ver. 6, 12, 13, 18.

Beſides, it is enough to ſhew, that in a ſtrict and proper ſenſe, *the Word is God*, be-

cauſe

cause he has *eternity* here attributed to him, and *all things* are declar'd to have been *made by him.* He has *eternity* ascribed to him, in that he is said to have existed *in the beginning*; which is a phrase expressive of eternity: for thus 'tis said elsewhere, *the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his ways*; which in the next verse is explain'd to be *from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.* And as he is thus declared to be eternal, so likewise he is expresly said to be the *Creator* of all things; *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Now certainly, creation is a distinguishing peculiar character of the *true God*, by which he is raised above all that are called *gods*, and on account of which he claims the worship of the host of heaven; for he is *worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power; for he has created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created.* And therefore, as the *making all things* is ascribed to Christ, he has an undisputable title to the Deity, and in a strict and proper sense *the Word is God.*

Prov. viii. 22, 23.

Ver. 3.

Jer. x. 11.

Rev. iv. 11.

Such is the high and glorious character, that the apostle *John* hath given us of *Christ*; and while the other evangelists in the beginning of their gospels, speak of Christ as to his human nature, and give us an account of his nativity as the Son of Man; the apostle opens his in a more lofty manner; with

an account of the Divinity of Christ, and of the eternity of his existence as the Son of God. *Matthew* has introduc'd his gospel, speaking of Christ as Man, and tells us in the genealogy that he has given us, the several ancestors he was descended from: but the apostle *John* considers him as God, and speaks of him as having existed from eternity with the Father, before he took upon him flesh and blood. And how should this possess our minds with high and lofty thoughts of Christ, under the mean appearance that he made on earth? How should it make us to adore his Majesty, and to admire his Grace, while we consider him to be truly *God* as well as *Man?* How should it fill us with the highest value and esteem of Christ, and how should it enlarge our gratitude for the unspeakable gift that God has given us of his Son, while we consider him as the *incarnate God*, and meditate upon this glorious mystery, *the Word made flesh?* But this now brings me to consider,

Secondly, What the apostle tells us of *the Word*, of whom he had given us such a high and glorious character, and whom he had described as truly God: And here we have a mystery, that far exceeds the most exalted thoughts of men or angels; for he declares concerning him, that *the Word was made flesh*; that is, he took the human nature into an intimate and real union with the

the Deity; and taking part of flesh and blood, he was made *a Man* like to our selves. For the word *flesh* is often us'd in scripture, to signify the intire human nature, consisting both of soul and body: as when 'tis said, that *all flesh shall see the salvation of God:* Luke iii. 6. and again, *by the deeds of the law there* Rom. iii. *shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.* 20. In these and many other places, it is evident, that by *flesh* we are not to understand the body only, but *man*, as he is compounded both of soul and body. And the word *flesh* may rather have been used than *man*, because it is the vilest and the weakest part of man; that so it might appear to what a low degree the Son of God had humbled and debas'd himself, by clothing his Deity with the infirmities of mortal flesh, and taking all the weakness of the human nature, as far as it was free from sin, into a personal union with the Godhead. But to be more particular in speaking to this glorious mystery,

(1.) *First*, We shall consider something of the nature of this union; and then, we shall enquire,

(2.) *Secondly*, Into the grounds and reasons of it.

(1.) *First*, We shall consider something of the nature of this union; a subject that indeed is far above us, and which it is impossible that we should fully comprehend. For how can we conceive, that one *equal with*

with God, ſhould be made *in the form of a ſervant*, that glory ſhould be join'd with vileneſs, and the Creator be united to the creature? How could *God* take upon him *the likeneſs of man*? How could the eternal *Word* be made infirm and mortal *fleſh*? This is indeed a myſtery the ſcripture no where has explain'd; and therefore 'twould be folly for us to pretend to tell you, what is the *manner* of this union; the underſtanding traces it in vain, and the compariſons that have been brought from nature, to help us in our notions of it, do all of them fall vaſtly ſhort of this myſterious union; for there is nothing in the whole frame of nature that will fully anſwer it, or help us to a clearer notion of it, than what we may derive from the account the ſcripture gives us: where tho' the *manner* of it be not explain'd, yet ſeveral of its properties are intimated to us, from whence the nature of it may be in part diſcern'd; and tho' we cannot fathom all the depths of it, yet we have the thing it ſelf plainly declar'd, and put beyond all doubt, by ſeveral expreſs and poſitive aſſertions; as where we are told by the apoſtle *Paul*, that

1 Tim. iii. 16. *without controverſy great is the myſtery of godlineſs; God was manifeſt in the fleſh:* And

Col. ii. 3, 9. again, *In him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*; and *in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.*

So, that however uncertain and obſcure the manner of this union be, we find the thing

thing it self is clear and certain; we find it is an union of eternity with time, of power with weakneſs, of the Divinity with the human nature; and that our Saviour truly was *Immanuel*, *God with us*; *God manifeſt in* mortal *fleſh*. And thus from the account the ſcripture gives us, we may learn,

1. That there was *a real union of the two natures* in him, and that as he was truly *God*, ſo likewiſe he was truly *Man*. 'Twas no *imaginary* union, (as was aſſerted by ſome ancient hereticks,) reaching no farther than to appearance only; but he aſſum'd the true and proper *body* of a man, together with a human *ſoul*; and *taking on himſelf* the nature of *the ſeed of Abraham*, he was *in all things made like unto his brethren*, ſin only excepted. And this was what behoved him, that by this means he might remove the taint of ſin from the whole human nature, which had infected every faculty and member both of the ſoul and body. It is expreſly ſaid, a *body was prepared for him*, and he *took part of fleſh and blood*, that he might *bear our ſins in his own body on the tree*; and by the ſhedding of *his own blood*, he might *obtain eternal redemption for us*. He had a *body* that was ſubject to the ſame infirmities with ours, expos'd to wearineſs and pain, and liable to ſufferings and death. And tho' he was exempt from the defiling ſtains of ſin, yet he ſubmitted to the defects and weakneſs that ſin has brought

Heb. ii. 16, 17.

Heb. x. 5.

Heb. ii. 14.

1 Pet. ii. 24.

Heb. ix. 12.

brought upon the human nature; and upon
Rom. viii. 3. this account is said, to be sent *in the likeness of sinful flesh.* And how amazing therefore is the condescension of our Saviour upon this account, that he assum'd our nature, not as it was perfect in a state of innocence, but as it was ruin'd and defac'd by sin? And as he took the body of a man, so also he assumed a human *soul*, that was endued with the same faculties as ours; a soul that was improveable in knowledge, and
Luke ii. 52. that *increas'd in wisdom*, as his body grew
Heb. v. 7. *in stature*; a soul that was susceptible of hope
Heb. xii. 2. and fear, and liable to joy and grief: he
John xi. 33. *groan'd in spirit, and was troubled* at the death of *Lazarus*; and when his *sufferings* began, *his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even*
Mat. xxvi. 38. *unto death*; and in the end, he felt the pangs of death, his soul was separated from
Mat. xxvii. 50. his body, and he *yielded up the ghost.* So that in short, there's nothing can be more absurd, than the conceit of those who imagine that *the Word* supplied the place of a *soul* to *the Man Christ Jesus*, and that *the flesh* he took, was only animated by *the indwelling Deity*; for it is evident, that he had all the affections of a human soul, as well as all the qualities of a human body: and as we have seen before, that he was truly *God*, so it is no less clear, that he was truly *Man.* Nor is it possible the Deity should suffer such a change as to become a human soul, or to be capable of fear and grief, and some

of those affections we have been speaking of. And this now leads me further to observe,

2. That tho' there be a real union of the two natures in the *incarnate Word*, yet *the essential properties of each remain distinct*, without confounding of the two natures, or changing of them one into another. The natures still remain'd distinct, and each of them preserve their natural and essential properties; and neither is the Deity chang'd into Flesh, nor the Flesh transform'd into God. It is indeed impossible that any change should happen to *the eternal Wisdom*, to that *Word* that *was God*. An infinite eternal Being could never be transform'd or chang'd into a being of a finite nature, subject to all the various accidents of human life, to manifold infirmities, to cruel sufferings, and a shameful death. Nor, on the other hand, is the humanity transform'd into the Deity; for it is impossible, that temporary flesh should ever become eternal, or what is finite, be advanc'd to infinite; nor could the Son of God, in such a case, have been our Saviour; for thus he would have been incapable of suffering. Nor is there any blending of the two natures into one, so as to swallow up the human in the divine, and form a third compounded nature different from each of them: for in this case the *incarnate Word* would neither be *God* nor *Man*; and 'tis impossible the Deity should thus degrade itself, or suffer any such change

change or alteration. So that however they are join'd together by a real union, yet the two natures ſtill remain diſtinct; and in one perſon Chriſt contains the glorious infinite perfections of the Deity, and the infirmities of the humanity, without any mixture or confuſion. But again,

3. Tho' the two natures ſtill remain diſtinct, yet they are ſo united by a complete inſeparable union, as to *make one perſon*; or, as we may expreſs it otherwiſe, there is *a perſonal union of the two natures in him.* And thus he is always ſpoken of in ſcripture as a ſingle perſon; and what belongs to either of the natures, is attributed to the perſon. 'Tis with a manifeſt view to this, the ſufferings of the human nature are ſaid to be the ſufferings of that perſon; and tho' he only could be capable of ſuffering as he was *Man*, yet there's a value put upon his ſufferings, as having all the dignity of the divine nature in them. *The blood* he ſhed as *Man*, is ſaid to be *the blood of God*; and he *who upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, is ſaid to have *taſted death for every man.* Yea, when one of the natures only is mention'd, thoſe things are often attributed to it, which properly belong only to the other nature, or to both of them together. For thus, *the Son of Man* is ſaid *to be in heaven*, tho' this was only true of him as he was *God*, his human nature being then on earth: and ſo again, *The Man Chriſt Je-*

Acts xx. 28.

Heb. ii. 9.

John iii. 13.

sus is said to be the *one Mediator between God and Men*; tho' this belong'd to him, not merely as he was *Man*, but as he was *God and Man* united. So that in short, 'tis evident, there is a personal union of the two natures in the *Word made flesh*; and what belongs to either, or to both of them, may be ascrib'd to Christ, as to a single person: and *God* may thus be said to have suffer'd on the cross, and to have *redeem'd the Church with his own blood*, and *the Lord of glory* may be said to have been *crucified*. And otherwise indeed his office as a Mediator would be quite destroyed, and he would utterly be incapable of discharging it: for if he were not God and Man united in one person, tho' he might suffer and die for sin as *Man*; yet there could never be sufficient value in his sufferings, to purchase the remission of our sins, and reconcile us unto God: and it was necessary therefore he should add a value to them by the dignity of his Godhead, that so they might be enough to satisfy God's offended justice, and to secure the honour of his truth and holiness. And now having shewn you thus the nature of this union, and open'd to you something of this glorious mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, I go on,

1 Tim. iii. 5.

1 Cor. ii. 8.

(2.) *Secondly*, To enquire briefly into the grounds and reasons of it, and for what end it was design'd. And here the event that we have been speaking to, is so astonishing; the grace of God in *sending his own Son in the likeness*

likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, is ſo ſurprizing; and the condeſcenſion of *the eternal Word* in willingly ſubmitting to be *made fleſh* is ſo wonderful; that we undoubtedly muſt conclude, that there were weighty reaſons for it, and that it was intended for a glorious end. We ſhall conſider it therefore,

1. With reſpect to *God*, and,
2. With reſpect to *Chriſt*.

1. With reſpect to *God*; we may conclude the great deſign for which he *ſent his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, was to provide a proper ſatisfaction for his juſtice, and to ſecure the honour of his truth and holineſs, while he diſplay'd his free and ſovereign grace to fallen man. God having made the heavens and the earth, provided creatures to inhabit them, who might be capable of ſerving and enjoying him; and having plac'd the angels in heaven, and men upon earth, he furniſh'd them with ſuitable capacities for loving and adoring him: but with a vile ingratitude they both revolted from their Lord and Maker, and ſo became obnoxious to his wrath and juſtice: and both of them, in conſequence of their revolt from God, might juſtly have been caſt into eternal miſery. But while he pour'd out his wrath upon the fallen angels, and made his juſtice to appear
2 Pet. ii. 4. in *caſting of them down to hell*, he had deſigns of grace to fallen man, and mercifully undertook to find a ranſom for him.

As to the reaſons God might have, in rather ſhewing of his grace to fallen man, than

than to the fallen angels, ſome have ſuppos'd the intereſt of his glory might incline him to it; becauſe if he had ſuffer'd fallen man to periſh, without providing of a Saviour for him, all the whole ſpecies muſt have been deſtroy'd, and none among the human race could have attain'd the end of their creation: whereas the guilt of ſin had only ruin'd part of the angelick ſpecies, and others of them ſtill remain'd to praiſe him. Others have thought, the difference of their ſin might be regarded by him; and that the angels having ſinn'd without any motion from another, or any one to tempt them to it; without the excuſe of ignorance or weakneſs; and not contented with their own apoſtacy, had envied God his glory upon earth, as well as in heaven, and tempted man to follow them in their rebellion; God had reſolv'd he would not exerciſe his mercy towards them: whereas apoſtate man having been ſeduc'd by the temptations of a ſubtil enemy, who craftily had drawn him into the ſnare, there was more room for God to ſhew his mercy to him. But paſſing over theſe and other reaſons, we rather may reſolve it into his free and ſovereign grace, which made him chooſe to give the preference to man. And how ſhould ſuch a preference engage us to an eternal gratitude! that he ſhould paſs the angels by, and leave thoſe glorious beings, who are ſo far ſuperior to us in the excellence of their nature, to periſh in their ſin, without any hope of

mercy; while he has look'd with pity upon us, who had nothing to engage his love, and wonderfully has provided a Redeemer for us, *sending his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live thro' him.* How amazing is his grace! how happy the distinction he has made between us? how great the expence he has been at to save us!

1 John iv. 9.

I know that some have thought, *God by his absolute power could have saved man without a Mediator: and if he had pleas'd, there might have been no punishment of sin at all* *: But I am far from seeing, how such a method could have been consistent with his justice, or how the honour of his truth and holiness could have been thus secur'd. Was it not rather necessary God should shew the infinite hatred that he has to sin, and the respect he has to the authority of his law? This he has certainly been careful of in the provision he has made for our recovery by Christ, by whom he has provided for the atonement of our sin, by satisfying of his justice, and fully answering all that the law demanded. With this design it was he has sent his Son into the world, who by his sufferings has declared his righteousness, while he has made a way for the free exercise of his mercy. But again,

2. Let us consider the surprizing mystery of *the Word made flesh*, as to the end of it, with respect to *Christ*. And here the great

* See *Norton's Orthodox Evangelist*, p. 42, 43.

design

design of it was plainly to prepare and fit him for the office of a Mediator, and perfectly to qualify him for a Redeemer. By being God and Man united in one person, he is related nearly to us both; and therefore fit to mediate between us. He lays his hand upon us both, and is not only furnish'd with a sense of the infirmities of *man*, but perfectly is able to relieve them as he is *God;* and it is more particularly upon this account, as he is *the Word made flesh*, the title of *Redeemer* properly agrees to Christ; for in its primary sense, 'tis us'd to signify *a kinsman*, or *a person of the same blood*, who, by his near relation, was qualified by the law, —to redeem an inheritance that had been sold, or alienated from the family; ——to revenge his brother's death upon the murderer; ——and to maintain the name and honour of his brother, by raising him up a seed. These were the proper offices of a *Göel* or *Redeemer* under the law; and each of these may very fitly be applied to Christ, as by his Incarnation he is become *our brother*; for,——that inheritance of everlasting life, which utterly was lost and alienated by our first parents, he has redeem'd with the price of his own blood; and then again, —he has reveng'd the death of man upon the great contriver of it, that is the Devil, by giving him a fatal blow, and bruising him under his people's feet: and further, —he has taken an effectual method, not

Lev. xxiii. 25. Num. xxxv. 19. Deut. xxv. 5.

only to maintain our name and honour, but to preserve our persons too, to all eternity, by raising us to a new and glorious life in heaven.

These then, are offices perform'd by Christ, and he peculiarly was fitted for it; for he not only *took upon him flesh and blood*, but was *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*, and so was one of the same nature with us: He did not only *take a body* and *appear as man*, (which by his power he might have done, by making of himself a body of a different kind from ours, and thus he would have stood in no relation to us;) but he was *born of a woman*, and was *made of the seed of David according to the flesh:* From whence the apostle *Paul* declares, that *both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one;* they are all partakers of the same flesh and blood; *and therefore he is not asham'd to call them brethren.* And in this quality he had a *right* and title to redeem us, according to the law of redemption, as it is given us in *Chap.* xxv. of *Leviticus*; and at the same time too, he had a *power* of doing it, as he was capable of suffering death for us.

Rom. i. 3.

Heb. ii. 11.

Man only could not have redeem'd us, not being capable of bearing an infinite punishment: and *God only* (if I may so express myself) could not have done it, being not capable of suffering at all: But Christ, being *God and Man united*, has all the necessary qualifications for the accomplishment of so

so great a work! For, as he was *Man*, he offer'd up himself a sacrifice; and as he was *God*, he gave an infinite value to the sacrifice he offer'd. And thus, it was with this design he came into the world, and took the human nature into a personal union with the divine, that so he might be qualified to be the Redeemer of his people.

And thus, we have set before you the glorious mystery of the *Incarnation* of the *Son of God*; and for a close of what we have been offering to you,

1.) How should this mystery be studied by us, and fill our hearts with admiration and a lively gratitude? Can any thing so much deserve the study and attention of our minds, as that which is the great foundation of our hope and joy? Can any thing excite our wonder more, than the amazing condescension of the Son of God? That he should lay aside his glory, and clothe himself with mortal flesh, to save us from our sins? That he should leave the bosom of his Father, and willingly submit to all the infirmities of the human nature, that he might raise us to the highest glory? How should it fill our hearts with wonder and astonishment? How should it raise us to a lively gratitude? How can we ever enough express our thankfulness to him who has found so wonderful a way for reconciling us to God? *Our souls shall magnify the Lord,* Luke i. 46, 47.

and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour.

2.) How should our hearts be fill'd with love to him who has been at such expence to save us? How should the *Father's* love affect us, that he should give his Son from his own bosom, and shew such wonderful regard to those who had abus'd his mercy, and had destroy'd themselves by sin? Shall we not love that God, who when he let the fallen angels perish, made such a wonderful provision for the recovery of fallen man? Shall not *the love of Christ constrain us*, who has debas'd himself, that he might take us into such a near relation to himself, and who *is not asham'd to call us brethren?* Oh! that our hearts were suitably impress'd with the astonishing expressions of the love both of the *Father* and the *Son?* How should we willingly submit to do his will, and shew our love by our obedience to him? How should his glory be our aim? And how should we delight to honour him?

3.) On what a poor foundation do the hopes of such depend, who believe not *Christ* to be both *God* and *Man?* Justice is arm'd against you; and who is there can save you from the wrath that is to come? Will you rely upon a creature only, when you have the guilt of sin upon you, the weight of which has sunk the angels into the lowest hell? Will you depend upon a righteousness, that has no merit equal to your guilt, when nothing less than what is infinite can

save

ſave you from your ſins? — Bleſſed be God we have a ſurer ground to build our hopes upon; we have *help laid* for us *upon one that is mighty*; we have a Saviour that is truly God as well as Man, and therefore muſt be *able to ſave unto the uttermoſt, all that come unto God by him.* And hence, Heb. vii. 25.

4.) How great is our engagement to confidence in Chriſt, and what a ſtrong aſſurance may the believer have of his ſalvation. How muſt it fill our hearts with joy and comfort, to think that we have a Saviour that has aſſum'd our nature, and therefore cannot but *be touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities;* and as he knows our wants and weakneſſes, ſo will be ready to relieve them? And *ſince we have ſuch a great High-prieſt,* how may we *come with boldneſs to the throne of Grace,* and *draw nigh to God with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith?* When Chriſt has ſtoop'd ſo low that he might be our Saviour, can we have any queſtion of his loving kindneſs towards us, or can we think that he will ſuffer any thing to be wanting to our compleat ſalvation? No, with a holy confidence we may rely upon him, and may aſſure ourſelves, that he who has debas'd himſelf ſo low to ſave us, will carry on the work, till he has brought his people into glory. But then, Heb. iv. 15. Heb. x. 22.

5.) *Laſtly,* How ſhould it be our earneſt prayer, how ſhould it be the great concern

and care of every soul among us, that Christ may have a union with ourselves, with our particular persons, as well as with our common nature? For his assuming of our nature, will be of no advantage to us, unless by faith he be united to our persons. 'Tis infinite grace indeed that God is come so near us, and that *the Word* is *made flesh*, that so he might be qualified to be our Saviour. But when we have such a way for our salvation open'd to us, when Christ is come so far to seek our peace, when he has veil'd his glory that he might treat familiarly with us; shall we refuse and shut our hearts against him? How will it aggravate our sin if we neglect the Saviour that is offer'd to us? And how shall we be left without excuse, if we despise the grace that is discover'd to us, in the *Incarnation* of the *Son of God?* Oh! let the grace that he has shewn, invite and draw us to him; and let the condescension of an *incarnate God* encourage and excite us to be seeking for a closer union with him; that he may own us for his *brethren* at the great day, and *give us an inheritance* with those whom he has *redeem'd unto God by his blood.*

Christ's

CHRIST's Glory in his Incarnation,

AND THE

Fulneſs of his GRACE and TRUTH.

JOHN i. 14.

And the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of Grace and Truth.

WE have here the glory and grace, the majeſty and condeſcenſion of our dear Redeemer, ſet before us; a ſubject that is worthy of our beſt attention, as it diſplays the wonders of the love of Chriſt, and ſhews the rich and ſuitable proviſion he has made both for our peace and comfort here, and for our happineſs hereafter. SERM. II. preach'd *Novemb.* 8, 1728.

By

By our apoſtacy from God, we had deſtroy'd ourſelves, and were reduc'd to an unhappy loſt condition: We had loſt the favour of the God that made us, loſt all the purity of our nature, and all the happineſs that would have crown'd our innocence: Nay, what is more, we had loſt all hopes of ever being freed from this unhappy ſtate; we knew not how to ſatisfy offended juſtice, we had no price to pay for our redemption, no ranſom to deliver us from the wrath our ſins deſerv'd! We were accurſed by the law, ſentenc'd to death and everlaſting miſery, and might as well be given up for loſt, as one who is juſt expiring under the pangs of an incurable diſeaſe. And ſo far were we from ſeeking unto God for help, who alone could heal and ſave our ſouls, that we were ſtill departing further from him, and like benighted travellers who had loſt their way, were wandring in the crooked paths of ſin, inſenſible of our danger, even while we were upon the brink of dreadful precipices that every moment threaten'd us with deſtruction.

But, oh the wonders of the love of Chriſt! While we were in this loſt undone condition, with pity and compaſſion he beheld us; while we were thus expos'd to wrath and miſery, and while we thus were wandring in the paths of ſin and deſtruction, he came from heaven himſelf to ſeek and ſave us. This was the kind deſign he came upon,

upon, and with a view to this it was, he took our nature on him, and did and ſuffer'd all that we read of in the goſpel. It was for this he left the boſom of his Father, and *was made fleſh;* for this, he *dwelt among us, full of Grace and Truth*; for this he *made an end of ſin, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs*; for this he bore the puniſhment his people had deſerved, and ſhed his precious blood to purchaſe pardon and a right to glory.

The tidings therefore of the love of Chriſt toward us, cannot but be receiv'd with wonder by us. To think the Son of God ſhould come from heaven to ſhew his love to ſuch apoſtate creatures; to think, the eternal *Word* ſhould be *made fleſh*, and paſs a mean deſpis'd life on earth; to think, that he ſhould make himſelf a curſe to free us from the condemnation we deſerve; to think, that he ſhould open to us, the inexhauſtible and all-ſufficient treaſures of his Grace and Truth, that he might fill our ſouls with light and comfort here, and fit us for the enjoyment of himſelf hereafter; cannot but fill us with aſtoniſhment, and make us to admire the exceeding riches of his grace. To what a height of honour has he rais'd our nature, by making it the temple of the Deity, the habitation of eternal Wiſdom? By this, the glorious Majeſty of heaven is become related in a ſurprizing manner, to the vile deſpicable race of mortal man; Hea-

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ven is allied to earth, and the Son of God is made as *the first-born among many brethren.* For now, *both he that sanctifieth, and they* Heb. ii. 11. *who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not asham'd to call them brethren.* Surely whenever we reflect upon this love and condescension of the Son of God, our wondring souls must needs cry out, Behold what manner of love is this? Was ever any love like that of Christ?

One would imagine, that the wonders of it should dwell continually upon our minds, and raise up our affections to a holy admiration: But such, alas, is the corruption of our nature, such is our coldness and indifference to spiritual things, that such important and affecting subjects seldom engage our thoughts, and we allow but little time to meditate on what concerns our souls. What passes in the world about us is commonly more regarded by us, than making a provision for eternity: The anxious cares and hurries, the profits and the pleasures of the present life, drive out the thoughts of what may be the ground of everlasting joy and consolation to us. How seldom is it *Christ* is in our thoughts? And if the wonderful events of *providence* may possibly affect us, how seldom is it that we employ our thoughts upon the more surprizing wonders of his *Grace*? If we can gain the advantages or profits of the world, we fancy that our time and pains are well bestow'd, and can with

pleaſure ſet ourſelves to think about it? but ſcarcely can we ſpare an hour in a whole day, (and would to God, I might not ſay in a whole week,) to think upon the important buſineſs of our ſouls, to meditate upon the myſteries of godlineſs, and to conſider the advantages ariſing from redeeming love.

'Tis neceſſary therefore, we ſhould be excited to a more frequent and attentive conſideration of theſe things; 'tis neceſſary that the riches of the Grace of Chriſt ſhould be diſplay'd and brought to our remembrance, and that the full proviſion he has made for the ſupply of all our wants ſhould be propos'd and recommended to us. And with this view it is, that I would offer you ſome further thoughts, on what the apoſtle here has told us of our Saviour; that *the Word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of Grace and Truth.* In diſcourſing of which, we have propos'd (according to the order of the words,) to conſider,

I. The glorious myſtery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, as it is here aſſerted by the apoſtle, when he tells us, that *the Word was made fleſh.*

II. The evidence we have of this, in that he *dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* And,

III. The

III. The happy fruit, and the advantage of it, in that hereby we have a Saviour that is *full of Grace and Truth.*

I. We have already spoken to the first of these, and have insisted on the great and glorious mystery of godliness, *the Word made flesh;* a mystery that far exceeds our most exalted thoughts, fill'd with *glad tidings of great joy* to men, and giving us the highest reason to ascribe *glory to God on high.* We have shewn you something both of the majesty and condescension of our great Redeemer, who tho' he was properly and truly *God,* yet *was made in the likeness of men,* and took the human nature into an intimate and real union with the Deity. We have shewn you, how he humbled and debas'd himself, by clothing of his Deity with the infirmities of mortal flesh, and taking all the weakness of the human nature, as far as it was free from sin, into a personal union with the Godhead; that so he might be fully qualified for the work of our redemption, being capable of suffering for sin as he was *Man,* and capable of adding such a value to his sufferings as he was *God,* as might be enough to satisfy offended justice.

But now, as this was such a strange surprizing mystery, that *God* in very deed should leave the glory that he had in heaven, to *take upon him the form of a servant;*

and that the King of kings and Lord of lords, ſhould ſtoop ſo low, as to endure the ſorrows and reproaches of an afflicted life; might they not ſay, when they beheld him loaded with infirmities, *deſpiſed and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief*, "Is this the Son of God? Is "this the Lord of glory? *He has no form* "*nor comelineſs, nor any beauty in him, that* "*we ſhould deſire him.*" No, under all the meanneſs of his appearance upon earth, the Glory of his Deity did ſtill ſhine thro' the veil of his humanity, and they had evidence ſufficient of the dignity of his perſon, that he was truly *God* as well as *Man*, and that he was indeed, what they aſſerted him to be, *the Word made fleſh*. Which brings me to conſider Iſa. liii. 2, 3.

II. The evidence we have of this, in that he *dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father*. They had abundant proofs that he was really *God manifeſt in the fleſh*; and notwithſtanding all the meanneſs of his outward circumſtances, they had enough to ſatisfy them of the dignity of his perſon, and to convince them that it was no fancy, but a real thing. For,

1. *Firſt*, He *dwelt among them*, that is, among the *Jews*; of whom the evangeliſt had been ſpeaking juſt before, *He came unto* Ver. 11.

to his own, and his own receiv'd him not. Or, in a more peculiar manner, we may ſay, he *dwelt among* his own diſciples; freely converſing with them, and going about from place to place, and doing good; not hiding himſelf in a corner, but openly appearing unto all. He *dwelt* among them, not as a wayfaring man, that only tarries for a night, but made his reſidence for a conſiderable time among them: So that they could not want for opportunities enough to be acquainted with the Glory of his perſon; and had ſufficient leiſure to enquire into the nature of it, and by repeated proofs to be convinc'd, what they ought to believe concerning it.

The word in the original (ἐσκήνωσεν,) which we have render'd *dwelt*, does ſignify *to pitch a tabernacle*, and plainly appears to have ſuch a near affinity to what is us'd in the old teſtament, when mention is made of God's dwelling by the *Shechinah*, or his glorious preſence, in the tabernacle, and often ſhining forth there; that we have reaſon to believe, this phraſe has a peculiar reference to the divine nature, or to the fulneſs of the Deity dwelling in Chriſt's human nature. And as this *Shechinah* or viſible glory was wanting in the ſecond temple, that defect was made up, by the habitation of the divine nature in the temple of *Chriſt*'s body, ſo as never to be ſeparated from it; according as the prophet *Haggai* had

had foretold; *the deſire of all nations ſhall come, and I will fill this houſe with my Glory, ſaith the Lord of hoſts:* which promiſe was fulfill'd by ſending this *Immanuel*, or *Word made fleſh* among them, while the ſecond temple was yet ſtanding. Hag. ii. 7.

So that in Chriſt we have the *Shecinah*, or Glory of the Lord appearing in the numerous and ſignal demonſtrations that he gave of his Divinity, during the time of his abode on earth; and the apoſtles, while *he dwelt among them*, could not but ſee the glorious and convincing ſymbols of the peculiar preſence of the Godhead in him. For it is added,

2. *Secondly*, That *they beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* They had ſuch bright diſcoveries of his Glory, and ſaw ſuch wonderful effects and evidences of it, as could not but convince them, that he was really *the Son of God*, and had indeed *all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily.* They ſaw the Glory of the Deity appearing in, and ſhining from the tabernacle of Chriſt's body; as the Glory of the Lord did from the tabernacle of old, by which he teſtified his preſence there: and by the beams of Glory that darted thro' the veil of his humanity, 'twas evident that *Chriſt* could be no other than *the only begotten of the Father.* Col. ii. 9.

I shall not enter here into a large particular description of the Glory that appear'd in Christ: however, this may be observ'd in general, that

The apostle here seems to have had a more particular regard to *the Glory of Christ at his transfiguration,* in which there was a bright discovery of his Glory made, and he himself had been one of the three, that were *eye witnesses of his Majesty.* And this is what the apostle *Peter* has expresly urg'd, in confirmation of the glorious things that he had said of the authority and power of Christ, and of the glory of his coming;

2 Pet. i, 16, 17, 18. *For* (says he) *we have not follow'd cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his Majesty; for he receiv'd from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

And we have a more particular account of the remarkable appearance of his Glory, in the evangelists, where we are told, that

Mat, xvii. 1,---5. *Jesus took Peter and James and John, and brought them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his raiment was white as the light: and behold, there appeared Moses and Elias talking with him; and a bright cloud overshadow'd them;*

and

and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleaſed; hear ye him. And it is then particularly, that it is ſaid by *Luke*, of thoſe who were upon the mountain with him, that *they ſaw his Glory.* Luke ix. 32.

But yet, we need not confine *the Glory* that is here ſpoken of, only to this particular ſenſe; but we may likewiſe add, *the Glory of his perſonal inherent qualities*, by which he was *fairer than the children of men*, Pſal. xlv. 2. ſhining among them with a ſuperior luſtre, and far ſurpaſſing them in ſpiritual and gracious excellencies. For tho' it was obſcur'd under a veil of fleſh, yet he had ſtill *the fulneſs of the Godhead* in him; and the perfections of his nature were diſcover'd with a ſufficient brightneſs in *the Glory* of his *Grace* and *Truth*; *the Glory* of his *love* and *charity*, which ſhew'd itſelf in a continual readineſs of *doing good* both to the bodies and the ſouls of men; and in *the Glory* of his *holineſs*, which in a more peculiar manner, is *the Glory of God*; for in the viſion of *Iſaiah*, the adoring *Seraphims* are ſaid to cry, *Holy*, Iſa. vi. 3. *Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hoſts; the whole earth is full of his Glory:* Which by the evangeliſt is applied to *Chriſt*, who has expreſly told us, when he is ſpeaking of the meſſage that was delivered to the prophet in this viſion, that *theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his Glory, and ſpake of him.* John xii. 41.

And we may likewise add, *the Glory of his miracles*, and of the mighty works, which plainly shew'd the greatness of his power, and which extorted this acknowledgment from many, that *of a truth he was the Son of God.*

Mat. xiv. 33. Mark iii. 11.

And we may mention too, *the Glory of his baptism*, and of the testimony that was given him from the Father; when *the heavens were open'd unto him, and the Spirit of God like a dove descended upon him*, and the Father proclaimed by *a voice from heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased:* Which tho' the apostles might not have heard themselves, yet they had sufficient evidence of the truth of it.

Mat. iii. 16, 17.

And further, we may add to this, *the Glory of his resurrection* and *ascension*, and of his *sending of the Spirit:* which were convincing proofs, that he was really what he declar'd himself to be, *the Son of God.* Wherefore the apostle *Paul* particularly has applied to his *resurrection* that passage of the *Psalmist, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

Acts xiii. 33.

So many singular and remarkable occasions could not but give a full conviction to the apostles, of the dignity of his person, and left no room for any doubt concerning it. And hence the apostle does not only say, that they had *seen his Glory*, but that they had a fix'd abiding sight of it; they had

had *contemplated*, and *look'd upon it* at leiſure, and with ſerious reflection; for this the word ἐθεασάμεθα does properly ſignify. And therefore in another place, the ſame apoſtle has expreſs'd it in the ſtrongeſt terms; *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,* (or carefully contemplated,) *and our hands have handled of the Word of life; that which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you; that ye alſo may have fellowſhip with us.* 1 John i. 1, 3.

And what was it they learn'd from this convincing contemplation? Why this, that *Chriſt* was *the only begotten of the Father*. For they *beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father; a Glory* that became *the Son of God*; and that was ſuitable to no one elſe; for he has expreſly ſaid, *he will not give his Glory to another*. And indeed, if we conſider Chriſt as *the Word of God*, or as *the eternal Wiſdom*, even in this ſenſe he is *the begotten of the Father*: and we have heard him ſpeaking of himſelf, *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; when there were no depths, I was brought forth.* Or, on the other hand, if we conſider him as *Man*, or as *the Word made fleſh*, he is alſo in this ſenſe, *the begotten of the Father*; for thus the angel Iſa. xlviii. 11. Prov. viii. 22, 23, 24.

Luke i. 35. *Gabriel* tells the virgin *Mary*, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*

And as he is *the begotten of the Father*, with respect to his Divinity, and with respect to his humanity, so likewise he is *the only begotten.* For as to his Divinity, the wisdom of God is *one*, and cannot be multiply'd: And as to his humanity, that, as deriv'd from the blessed Spirit, is also *one.* Of these two natures there was form'd but *one person*; nor ever has there been, nor will be any other.

So that in short, he was *the Son of God* John iii. 16. in a peculiar and a proper sense; for *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son:* a Son that had the same perfections, and was coequal with his Father; for thus 'tis evident, that when *he said that God was his Father*, they understood it was John v. 18. no less than *making himself equal with God.* He was *the Son of God*, not by adoption, as believers are; but by eternal generation, he was the same in substance with the Father, as to his Deity; and when he came and took *the body* that the Father had *prepar'd* him, when he assum'd the human nature into an union with the divine, and when *the Word* Col. ii. 9. *was* thus *made flesh*, he had *all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily.*

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The apoſtles therefore had ſufficient evidence, that *Chriſt* was *the only begotten of the Father*, becauſe they had *beheld his Glory*. For as *Chriſt* did profeſs himſelf to be *the only Son of God*, God never would have given ſuch *a Glory* to him, if he had not been ſuch in reality. God never would have thus remarkably interpos'd, to carry on an impoſture, and to crown a cheat with ſucceſs. The giving ſuch a Glory to him, was a ſufficient and convincing proof, that he was really what he profeſs'd himſelf to be. And therefore the apoſtles urge this very argument to convince the unbelieving *Jews*; for thus the apoſtle *Peter* tells them, *Jeſus of Nazareth* was *a man approv'd of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye your ſelves alſo know.* And in like manner the apoſtle *Paul* ſays to the *Romans*, that *Jeſus Chriſt, who was made of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh*, was *declar'd to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the reſurrection from the dead.* So that *the Glory of Chriſt* was a proof, that he was *the only begotten of the Father.*

Acts ii. 22.

Rom i. 3, 4.

And this proof is ſtill more convincing, if we conſider, that at the very time when he had this *Glory* given him in the brighteſt manner, the Father by a voice from heaven declar'd he was *his Son.* This, (as we have

shewn already) was done, both at his baptism, and at his transfiguration. And therefore the apostles, who had been acquainted with what had past at his baptism, and who themselves had been witnesses of his transfiguration, could not but be persuaded, that he was *the Son of God*; for they had *beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*

And therefore now, (before we leave this head;) can there be any soul among us, that any longer can pretend to question the Greatness and the Glory of our dear Redeemer? the truth of which we find to be attested by so many witnesses, that had the clearest proofs and evidences of it, and who have seal'd with their blood *what their eyes beheld, and their hands did handle, of the Word of life?* And shall we not be every one of us possess'd with the most lofty and exalted thoughts of *Christ*? and shall we not admire and adore him, as *the only begotten Son of God*?

'Tis true indeed, he was *made flesh*, and appear'd *in the likeness of men*; he suffer'd many sorrows and reproaches, and was *in all points tempted like as we are*, only that he continued *free from sin.* But all this while, he was *the Wisdom*, and *the Word of God; the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him*; and by the Almighty power of the Deity he wrought those miracles the apostles

Heb. iv. 15.

saw,

ſaw, and did the mighty works by which he prov'd his miſſion to the world.

'Tis true, that for a time he *dwelt among men*, and paſs'd a mean deſpiſed life on earth: But now, he is *gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made ſubject to him.* He has receiv'd *a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father.* Yea, even while he ſtill continued upon earth, the evidences of his human weakneſs were all along attended with clear diſcoveries of the Glory of his Deity. When at his birth he was *laid in a manger*, *a ſtar* appear'd, and pointed out the place where he was born, and *angels* came from heaven, to bring the tidings of his coming to the ſhepherds. When he was *wrap'd in ſwadling clothes*, *the wiſe men* came from the eaſt to worſhip him. When he was toſs'd upon the ſea, and thought to be *in jeopardy of ſhip-wreck*, he *commanded the winds and the waves*, and they obey'd him. When he was tempted *by Satan*, and was *an hungred* in the wilderneſs, *angels came and miniſter'd unto him.* When they demanded *tribute* of him for the temple, he order'd one of his diſciples, but to *caſt a hook into the ſea*, and preſently there was *a fiſh* that brought *a*

1 Pet. iii. 22.

Phil. ii. 10, 11.

Mat. ii. 9.

Luke ii. 10.

Mat. ii. 11.

Luke viii. 24.

Mat. iv. 11.

Mat. xvii. 27.

piece

piece of money to him in his mouth. And not to multiply examples, when he was *crucified and died upon the cross, the rocks were rent, the graves were open'd, and the sun was darken'd*, and a confusion ran thro' all the frame of nature. So that in short, tho' he was humbled in his Incarnation, and cloth'd himself with the infirmities of mortal flesh, yet he has all along confirm'd our faith with such discoveries of his Deity, that when we look upon his *Glory*, we cannot but conclude him to be *the only begotten Son of God.*

Mat. xxvii. 51.

Let us *behold his Glory* therefore with an eye of faith; and the advantage that we thus may have, will not be less than that of the apostles; and we have reason to expect, that the effects of it will be as glorious. For *Christ* himself declares to *Thomas, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* And the apostle *Peter* tells us, that those who *see not Christ, and yet believe, rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.* And well may we rejoice in Christ, when we consider,

John xx. 29.

1 Pet. i. 8.

III. The happy fruit, and the advantage of his Incarnation, in that hereby we have a Saviour that is *full of Grace and Truth.* For thus the apostle tells us, that *the Word* being *made flesh*, was *full of Grace and Truth;* which he again repeats in verse 17. *The law*

was

was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.

And certainly, we had all the greateſt need of *Grace and Truth*; for the whole human race was miſerably fallen into the deadly darkneſs of iniquity and error; a darkneſs that did ſtill increaſe and grow upon them, and out of which they never could be able to extricate themſelves: for *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned; and profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools.* This darkneſs every where had ſpread itſelf thro' all the earth, over the *Gentiles* and the *Jews*; as the apoſtle *Paul* does prove at length in his epiſtle to the *Romans*, and as the hiſtory of the *goſpel* plainly ſhews us: and 'tis in Chriſt alone that we have a full proviſion made for our deliverance out of this wretched ſtate. But that the *Fulneſs* that there is in Chriſt, may be more clearly ſeen, and the neceſſity and excellence of this *Grace* and *Truth* may be diſplay'd, we ſhall conſider them diſtinctly. And, Rom. i. 21, 22.

1. *Firſt*, We ſhall begin with *Grace*, and ſhall conſider what the evangeliſt has told us here of Chriſt, that he is *full of Grace*. He is not only *full of Grace*, as he is *God*, being eſſentially poſſeſs'd of all perfections; but he is alſo *full of* all *habitual* and *communicated Grace*

Grace as to his *human nature*; which has received whatever might be suitable to the excellence of a nature united personally with the Godhead, and all that might be necessary to the mediatorial office, that so he perfectly might accomplish the work of our redemption: And with respect to this
John iii. 34. 'tis said concerning him, that *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* In him there was *a Fulness* of wisdom to instruct us, of holiness to be a pattern and example to us, of power to work the miracles that might be necessary to confirm his mission, of mercy to forgive and pardon us, of grace to sanctify us, and of righteousness to save us. And in a word, it is in him alone that there is found whatever the justice of an offend God requires for satisfaction, and whatever the necessity of our souls requires for a supply;
Col. i. 19. for *it pleased the Father, that in him should all Fulness dwell.*

It seems indeed, as if the scripture sometimes did ascribe a kind of *Fulness* to the saints. Thus we are told of *Barnabas*, that he was
Acts xi. 24. *a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith:* And in like manner it is said of
Acts vi. 5, 8. *Stephen*, that he was *full of faith and power, and of the Holy Ghost.* And even with respect to Christians of a lower rank, the
Rom. xv. 14. apostle tells the *Romans*, he was *persuaded they were full of goodness.* Yet after all, this *Fulness* is really no more than want and scarcity, if once it comes to be compar'd with that of Christ. For, *As*

As to Chriſt, the Fulneſs that there is in him is ſuch, that there is nothing can be added to it. There is no different kind of Grace, which can be added to thoſe he already has, nor are they capable of an increaſe in meaſure or degree. As he is *God*, there is an infinite Fulneſs of all perfections in him, which he eſſentially enjoys, and has poſſeſs'd from all eternity. And as he is *Man*, if 'tis improper to aſſert, the Graces he has receiv'd are infinite, becauſe the ſubject that poſſeſſes them is finite; yet ſtill 'tis certain, that with reſpect both to their number and degree, they are as great as the humanity of *the Word* was capable of containing, and cannot poſſibly admit of any addition or increaſe. But on the other hand, *the Fulneſs of believers* is neither univerſal as to the different kinds of Grace, nor perfect as to their degree. They are *full* indeed, if they are compar'd with other men, who are void of Grace, and have receiv'd no ſpiritual bleſſings; but if they are look'd into, how many Graces do they want, and how imperfect are thoſe which they have! In every faithful ſervant of the Lord, there is ſtill ſomething wanting, there is ſtill ſomething to be added in order to perfection; and tis in Chriſt alone, that there is really a perfect Fulneſs.

And then beſides, *the Fulneſs of believers is at moſt no more than ſuch a Fulneſs as is ſufficient only for themſelves.* Their cruiſe contains a

quantity of oil, which may perhaps be enough to answer their own wants, and make their lamp continue burning; but as for lending any to supply the wants of others, every true Christian may in this respect say to his neighbour, what the wise virgins said unto the foolish, *We cannot give you of our oil, lest thus, there should not be enough for us and you.* But on the other hand, *in Jesus Christ* there is not only a sufficience, but an *abundant overflowing Fulness.* He has *oil to sell,* to all that come to buy; what did I say, *to sell?* He *gives it freely, and without price,* to all that ask it of him. He brings us to *a Well* where we may *drink,* and *never thirst again; a well of living water, that springeth up to everlasting life.*

Mat. xxv. 9.

John iv. 14.

And thus indeed, we have in Christ, a suitable and full provision made for the supply of all our wants; for *all the Fulness of the grace* that dwells in him, he really is possess'd of for the use and benefit of his people. And if we are once united to him as his members, the influence, the life, the Gifts and Graces of our Head, will flow from him to us, and we shall be partakers of his *Fulness.* And thus, the consideration of our wants, will lead us to the knowledge of the excellence and virtue of *the Grace* there is in Christ.

Now then, if we consider men as sinners, 'tis evident that what they stand in need of, is to be justified, to be sanctified, and to be happy.

And

And thus it muſt be own'd, our wants are vaſtly great; but yet the Grace of Chriſt is equal to the neceſſities of our caſe, and we have a rich proviſion made for each of theſe, in the abundant Fulneſs of the Grace there is in Chriſt. For,

(1.) *'Tis by the Grace of Chriſt, that we obtain the pardon of our ſins, and are juſtified in the ſight of God.* Chriſt has neglected nothing, whereby he might accompliſh the mighty work of our redemption; and might obtain the pardon of their ſins, for all that ſhould believe in him. As ſoon as he came into the world, he ſet himſelf apart as a victim, as an atoning ſacrifice for the ſins of his people: for *when he came into the world, he ſays, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;* and we know, that *this is the will of God, even our ſanctification.* He liv'd in poverty and diſgrace, *rejected and deſpis'd by men, a Man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief:* He took upon himſelf to be our ſurety, and ſo fulfill'd all righteouſneſs, and perfectly obey'd the law: And then at laſt, to finiſh and complete the work, he died upon the croſs, and offer'd up himſelf a ſacrifice to purge away our ſins. And thus we are juſtified by his righteouſneſs, and by his blood we are waſh'd from our ſins: For God has *made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him:* And *Chriſt has redeem'd us from the curſe of the law,* Heb. x. 5, 7. 1 Theſſ. iv. 3. Iſa. liii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. And as he offer'd up himself a sacrifice on earth, so he is gone to plead in heaven, the worth and merit of the satisfaction he has made: In heaven he now is interceding for his people; and as he has promis'd, so he will take care, that all that are in him shall be absolutely free from any condemnation. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:* For, *who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* And thus, the wrath of God is appeas'd, and the curse is abolish'd; the thundring vengeance of the law is turn'd aside, the execution of its fearful threatnings is prevented; the adversary, that accus'd us is cast down; and we have liberty to approach with boldness unto the throne of grace, to ask, and to receive the pardon of our sins. He that procures us all this Grace, all these inestimable benefits, is *the Word*; and to proclaim this Grace to sinful men, he lifts up his voice, and cries, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* And when he *ascended up to heaven* himself, he gave commission to his servants to proclaim his Grace, and has committed unto them the

Rom. viii. 1.

Ver. 33, 34.

Mat. xi. 28.

the word of reconciliation: For *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation; now then we are ambaſſadors of Chriſt, as tho' God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be ye reconcil'd unto God.* And then, 2 Cor. v. 19.

(2.) As from this Grace we obtain the pardon of our ſins, ſo likewiſe *by this Grace it is that we are renew'd and ſanctified.* For we have in Chriſt not only *righteouſneſs*, to take away the guilt of ſin, but *ſtrength* to free us from the bondage of it. For being *aſcended up on high, he has led captivity captive, and has received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious alſo, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* And thus, *to every one of us is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt:* And *the law of the ſpirit of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus, has made us free from the law of ſin and death.* And then further, Pſal. lxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 2.

(3.) *Grace* after this *does lead us unto happineſs.* 'Tis this that gives us peace, that raiſes us to hope and comfort, and fills our ſouls with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. 'Tis this that chears our drooping ſpirits, and that revives our hearts with the delightful foretaſtes of that felicity, which God has laid up for us in the heavens above, and which one day we ſhall thro' Grace be brought to take poſſeſſion of.

These are the glorious fruits of Grace, the treasures of which are laid up in Christ, who (as the apostle says,) is *full of Grace.* And as in him all Fulness dwells, so *from his Fulness we may all receive, and Grace for Grace.* From him, as from the head and fountain, *a river* flows, *the streams of which make glad the city of God.* And as these living streams can never fail, so the Fulness of his Grace can never be exhausted. He is continually dispensing from it all that we stand in need of, and the variety of his gifts and Graces does fully answer all our wants, and is sufficient for the happiness of all his people. Plenteous indeed is the redemption Christ has wrought, and where can we have room, even to receive the many Graces that are pour'd out upon us? Surely we never can suppose, the Grace of Christ is small: It is impossible we ever should be straiten'd in the Grace of Christ, if we are not straiten'd in our own bosoms. Can we imagine it a little thing to obtain *the pardon of our sins,* and to be fill'd *with everlasting consolation, and with good hope thro' Grace?* Is it a little thing to *have Christ formed in us,* to see the riches of his Grace, and to enjoy the sweet discoveries of his love, while here; and all this, in order to behold his Glory, to see him as he is, and to be happy with him for ever hereafter? Are these small blessings? Are they a scanty portion? No, tis a rich variety, and in receiving them, we must acknowledge, that Christ is *full of Grace.* But, 2.

Psal. xlvi. 4.

2. *Secondly*, Let us now come to the other thing to be conſider'd, which is *Truth*. And here, not to inſiſt upon the *Truth* that does eſſentially belong to Chriſt as *God*, we might particularly ſhew you,

1.) That Chriſt, conſider'd as *the Word made fleſh*, is *full of an inherent and habitual Truth and Faithfulneſs*; by which he is wholly free from any ignorance or error, and has a perfect knowledge of every thing as it is. He never can be capable of any fraud or deceit, or liable to any change or contradiction. And thus we may depend upon his word, that every promiſe he has made ſhall be made good; for *all the promiſes of God, in him are yea, and in him amen.* And this is certainly a great advantage to us, that we have a Saviour, that perfectly knows our caſe; and who, as he has *a Fulneſs of Grace* to ſupply our wants, ſo he has *a Fulneſs of Truth* to engage him to apply it in a proper manner, and give us *Grace to help in every time of need.* But as the apoſtle here ſeems to declare that Chriſt is *full of Truth* with a peculiar reference to *the law*, (for he has told us but a little lower, that *the law was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*; and ſo has ſet the one againſt the other,) we rather ſhall take notice, 2 Cor. i. 20. Ver. 17.

2.) That Chriſt is *full of Truth*, as we have in him *the ſubſtance of all the figures, types, and ſhadows of the law*; and he was

perfectly agreeable to all *the promises and predictions of him.* The types and shadows of the law were perfected in him, the prophecies were all fulfill'd, and all the promises that had been given of his coming perform'd to a tittle. And we have therefore here a sure foundation for our faith; for Christ appears in truth to be the promis'd Saviour; and while *the law made nothing perfect, the bringing in of a better hope has done it; by which we* may now *draw nigh to God.* But then,

Heb. vii. 19.

3.) What the apostle seems particularly to have had in view, is, that Christ is *full of Truth*, as he has *made a full discovery of the mind and will of God*, and has acquainted us in the clearest manner with the true and only way to life. And with respect to this, it may be said, that *Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* And for this reason he may be call'd *the Word*; because it is by him the Father has reveal'd himself, having *spoken to us by his Son.* 'Tis Christ that has communicated to us all that was necessary to be known, in order to salvation; and he is therefore (as the apostle tells us,) *the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* The light did gloriously shine forth, and Truth was display'd in a very clear and particular manner, when Christ came down from heaven to dwell among men. There was a multitude of errors spread abroad, both among the

John xiv. 6.

Heb. i. 2.

John i. 9.

the Jews and the Gentiles, and theſe he rectified and ſcatter'd by his doctrine: There were many obſcurities in the old teſtament, and theſe he explain'd; there were abundance of important truths unknown to men in former ages, and theſe he reveal'd: And 'tis to ſignify this to us, that after the apoſtle has ſaid, *Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*, Ver. 18. he adds, *No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the boſom of the Father he hath declared him.*

Thus then, in Chriſt there was the Fulneſs of Grace, of Truth, of Wiſdom, and Divinity. And all the *Grace* and *Truth* that had appear'd in holy men of old, in the *Prophets*, in *Moſes*, and in *David*, all this was nothing to compare with the Fulneſs of Chriſt. All the Grace that ſhin'd in them, and all the Truths that they reveal'd, were all deriv'd from Chriſt as their fountain: And they deliver'd nothing unto others, nor poſſeſs'd any thing good or commendable themſelves, but what they had receiv'd from the Lord; in whom alone it is that we have an eminent and perfect *Fulneſs* both of *Grace and Truth.*

But now to draw to a concluſion, conſider,

(1.) How great a happineſs it is, to ſee diſplay'd among us, *the Grace and Truth* that Chriſt has brought into the world? Let us adore the riches of his goodneſs, and re-

joice in the ineſtimable benefits that we are
John vii. 46. made partakers of. *Never did any one ſpeak like Chriſt*; and ſhall we not therefore ſay
John vi. 68. with his diſciples, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go but unto thee? thou haſt the words of eternal life.* We are naturally full of ignorance and darkneſs; but we have in Chriſt the Wiſdom of the Father to inſtruct us; we have a light from heaven, to remove our fears, and to reſolve our doubts: We have the path of life diſcover'd to us in the Word, and the Spirit ſent *to lead us into all Truth.* We were eſtrang'd from God, and deſtitute of every thing that's good, but Chriſt has reconcil'd us unto God, and open'd to us a Fulneſs of Grace for the ſupply of our wants; procuring us the pardon of our ſins, and ſanctifying us by his Grace, that ſo we may be fitted for the enjoyment of Glory. And therefore,

(2.) How great are our obligations to our dear Redeemer, that in our loſt condition he ſhould come to ſeek and ſave us, and ſhould provide ſo fully for our compleat ſalvation? How ſhould the riches of his Grace indear him to our Souls? And under all our wants and weakneſſes, how ſhould it raiſe us to a lively hope and confidence in Chriſt, when we remember that we have in him ſuch *Grace* as is *ſufficient for us?* We had deſtroy'd ourſelves by ſin, and had no room to look for any thing but everlaſting miſery to be the fruit of our apoſtacy from

from God; but Chriſt took upon himſelf the puniſhment our ſin deſerv'd, and making reconciliation for iniquity has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs; and howſoever great our guilt may be, we have here a merit equal to our wants, a merit infinite and all-ſufficient. We have *Grace* to anſwer all the exigencies of our caſe; and tho' we are full of *wounds and bruiſes and putrefying ſores;* tho' *the whole head be ſick, and the whole heart faint,* yet we have here a ſovereign remedy provided; an infinitely wiſe and merciful Phyſician is ready here to give us health and ſafety: Here peace is offer'd to the wounded conſcience; here we are begotten to a lively hope, and here we have Grace to ſanctify and ſave us. Here alſo we are led into the way of *Truth* and have the *knowledge of ſalvation given us by the remiſſion of our ſins;* here we have a *light to them that ſit in darkneſs, to guide our feet into the way of peace;* here we have *the tender mercy of our God* reveal'd, and *the day-ſpring from on high has viſited us.* And ſhall not this engage us then to Chriſt, and make him precious to our ſouls? *To them that believe he is precious:* Let our affections then be fix'd upon him, and let us never be unmindful of the obligations we are under to him. And more eſpecially,

Iſa. i. 5, 6.

Luke i. 77.

1 Pet. ii. 7.

(3.) Let us be careful that we don't neglect the treaſures of his Grace and Truth that he has open'd to us. Let us not trifle

with his Grace, or foolishly despise the rich provision he has made for our salvation.— And when we have Christ reveal'd as *full of Grace and Truth*, let us no more be seeking Fulness where we shall never meet with it; in the enjoyments of the world, which we shall find to be no more than vanity and disappointment; or in our own attainments, where we shall meet with nothing but a Fulness of unworthiness, a Fulness of corruption and iniquity, and a vast emptiness of every thing that's good. All those who seek, either in *themselves* or in the other *creatures*, for what may fill and satisfy the wants and the desires of the soul, are like *the men of Shechem;* they leave *the fig-tree and the vine*, to chuse
Judg. ix. 15. *the bramble, which devours them:* Every thing out of Christ is properly like *the bramble*, which is good for nothing, either for fruit or ornament: All that the world affords is worthless and unprofitable; 'tis all but vanity and vexation of spirit. And therefore do not any longer trifle with your souls, but leave the creatures, and apply yourselves to Christ: For shall it be in vain, that *the Word was made flesh*, to enlighten and instruct you? And will you bring yourselves under the dreadful *condemnation* of those that willingly despise this *Word*, and
John iii. 19. *hate this Light because their deeds are evil?* 'Tis *Christ* alone that *has the words of eternal*

ternal life; and to whom therefore *ſhould you go* but unto him? However great your wants may be, in him you may have treaſures, more than ſufficient to enrich you; and if you *ask of him, he'll give you water,* John iv. 10. *which whoſoever drinketh of, ſhall never thirſt again.* —— And therefore now, ſince *Truth is come by Jeſus Chriſt,* and all the *Fulneſs* of it is in him, let us apply ourſelves to him, and *he will give us light;* and let us conſtantly adhere to him alone, as *the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* —— And thus his Truth will lead us to his *Grace,* that Grace on which our life and happineſs depends. And as without this Grace we can do nothing, let us be ſeeking it with the utmoſt fervency, and be deſirous of it both to ſanctify and ſave us. —— Let us be looking unto Chriſt as *full of Grace and Truth;* let us admire the Glory of his perſon, and the proviſion he has made for our ſalvation; and let us never be at reſt without an intereſt in him. And if we have him to be our portion, we may be ſure that *we ſhall want for no good thing;* but as he gives us *Grace,* and guides us by his *Truth,* ſo he will bring us in the end to Glory.

F I N I S.

CHRIST's

CHRIST's Mediation between GOD and Sinners:

Consider'd in two

SERMONS

On 1 TIM. ii. 5.

Preach'd at

Little St. *HELEN's*

November 22, and *December* 6, 1728.

By *THOMAS HALL.*

OF CHRIST the MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD and SINNERS.

1 TIM. ii. 5.

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

THERE is not any truth that is matter of revelation, but has its weight and moment: but of all the doctrines of the gospel, there is none of greater importance, than those which relate to the person and office of Christ. SERM. I. preach'd *Novemb.* 22, 1728.

In some of the preceding discourses, particular notice has been taken of his person; it is my province now, to speak something concerning his office.

This is set forth in the text, by a name that gives us the first and most general notion of

of it; the whole miniſtry committed to him being compriſed in it, and the ſpecial offices of Prophet, Prieſt and King, whereby this is diſcharg'd, being contained herein.

I ſhall caſt, what I intend to deliver upon this ſubject, into the following method.

I. I ſhall conſider the work of Chriſt as Mediator.

II. I ſhall endeavour to evince his fitneſs for his work.

III. I ſhall draw ſome Inferences, and endeavour to point to a ſuitable improvement.

I. I ſhall ſpeak to the work of Chriſt as Mediator, and ſhall attempt a brief account of this matter, by leading you through the following conſiderations.

1. *Chriſt's work, as Mediator, was to make peace.* This was the grand deſign of his office. This is denoted by the term *Mediator*; which, according to its common acceptation, directs us to conceive of ſome diſagreement, or variance between two parties. It likewiſe ſuppoſes, that the controverſy is come to ſuch a height, that all immediate treaty between the principals themſelves is drop'd, or laid aſide; and that upon account of the reſentment on one ſide, or both, ſuch a treaty would be improper, if

not hazardous and dangerous; or that the ſtate and condition of things being conſider'd, it is highly improbable, if not morally impoſſible, they ſhould ever, in that way, come to an agreement. When this is the caſe, if a reconciliation be intended, a Mediator muſt be appointed: this being the laſt expedient left to be attempted for an accommodation. Something of this kind is always ſuppos'd in the notion of a Mediator: where there is no diſagreement, there is no room for the office; and where the difference is like to be heal'd without it, a Mediator is needleſs. Hence we learn, that the great buſineſs of a Mediator, is to be a Peace-maker. His work is to adjuſt and ſettle matters that have been the ground of controverſy, according to the ſtrict rules of equity and juſtice; and, if poſſible, to the contentment and ſatisfaction of the parties concern'd.

This is the notion of a Mediator's work in general; and this is applicable to the caſe before us. Sin has made a breach between God and man. An holy God can never enter into an immediate treaty with guilty creatures. It would be moſt dangerous for ſuch to ſtand before him: ſhould we attempt it, we ſhould be but as chaff before the wind, or as thorns and briars before the flames. But in purſuance of everlaſting counſels, and according to an eternal compact between the Father and the Son, Chriſt has

has undertaken to be a Peace-maker. He engag'd in a way of righteousness and truth, to make a full reconciliation, and procure a perfect friendship between God and man. This was intimated to be the work of the Messiah, when he was term'd in prophecy, *The Prince of peace.* And he is set forth in the gospel as his peoples *peace*, having reconcil'd the whole church unto God, which was the foundation of the apostles preaching peace by Jesus Christ.

Isa. ix. 6.
Eph. ii. 14.

2. In order to make peace, Christ's work, as Mediator, was *to give satisfaction to divine justice.* That this was his only way of making peace, will appear, if we consider the parties between whom Christ acted as Mediator. These were God and man. The difference that was to be compos'd, was not a controversy between equals, or fellow creatures: if so, there might possibly have been matter of complaint on both sides: mutual injuries might possibly have been committed; through mistake or falshood, one might have overcharged the other. Things might possibly have been disguis'd, or misrepresented. Resentments might have been carried too far, or demands rais'd too high. Then it had been the work of a Mediator to call one or both the parties, as occasion required, to a calm review, and enter into a serious debate; to place things in a true light, and set aside every unjust charge. He might have seen cause

to require ſome conceſſion on one ſide, and enjoin a receding from terms that had been inſiſted upon without reaſon on the other; or, there might have been occaſion for cooling angry paſſions, by a friendly addreſs, and mollifying expreſſions: a ſoft anſwer might then have been uſeful to have turned away wrath——. But there was no room for ſuch methods as theſe, neither could they avail in the caſe before us. Here the controverſy is between the Creator and the creature; the former of all things; and man, a part of the workmanſhip of his hands. Between the Governour, Sovereign, and Lord of all; and man his vaſſal, the ſubject of his dominion and rule, between an holy Majeſty, and ſinful fleſh, between a righteous Lawgiver, and guilty criminals. There was no room for our Mediator to ſeek an abatement of the charge: for the proof was plain, and full againſt us; *we had fallen by our iniquities.* Hoſ. xiii. 1. Nor to extenuate the crime: for this was of the moſt heinous nature, attended with the ſaddeſt aggravations; nor was there the leaſt ground of complaint, as to any wrong that had been done to us; *neither we nor our fathers* found any iniquity in God. We only had been the offenders; God is exalted infinitely above all poſſibility of the leaſt act of injuſtice. Nor can he be charged with any poſſible unkindneſs towards an innocent and holy creature. And as to the divine

resentment, that is perfectly free from all spot and blemish. There is no mixture of cruelty in God's justice, or of madness in his wrath. The infinite purity of his nature, makes it impossible there should be any excess in his displeasure. There is nothing to be condemned as unjust or unreasonable in his demands, he can insist upon no terms of peace, but what are founded in righteousness and equity; nor was his compassion to be moved by a mere representation of the creature's misery; tho' *he delighteth not in the death of a sinner*, as 'tis the destruction of a creature; yet the *righteous Lord loveth judgment*, as 'tis the vindication of his own honour. What then remain'd to be done by Christ the Mediator, but to give the holy Majesty, that had been injur'd and offended, a full satisfaction? This he readily agreed to, when he engag'd to *restore that which he took not away.*

3. The Mediator was to *give satisfaction by magnifying the law.* The only point in which the great Jehovah could be injured by his creatures, was his honour. This was the sum of the charge that lay against us; we had robb'd God of his glory. Sin is the transgression of the law; and this is a dishonour to God who made the law. We are taught to reason thus by that passage of the apostle: *Through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?* A violation of the law must be interpreted a dishonour to the Law-giver,

Rom. ii. 23.

giver, as it virtually carries in it a denial of his wisdom, as if he knew not how to make laws fit for the government of his creatures; an impeachment of his righteousness and equity, as if he required a subjection and homage that was not his due: a reflection upon his goodness, as if he denied man the privilege of some beneficial enjoyment: a contempt of his power, as not able to make good the sanction of his law, by a performance of promises, or an execution of threatnings: a disparagement of his authority, as if he were not worthy to be obey'd or regarded: and a contradiction to his sovereignty, as giving the preference to our own will above his. Thus by trampling upon the law of God, we had dishonour'd him. How then shall a satisfaction be given him, unless the law be magnified? without this, no acceptable oblation could ever be made him. What are the cattle upon a thousand hills, or all the fowls of the mountains to him, whose is the world, and the fulness thereof? Could the whole creation be presented as an offering, it would be but to give him what was his own before: for *all things come of him.* The truth of the case, with respect to this, and the mind of God concerning it, is particularly and expressly declared in those words, *Sacrifice and offering thou would'st not. In burnt-offering and sacrifice for sin thou hadst no pleasure. Then said the* Mediator, *Lo, I* Heb. x. 5---10.

come to do thy will, O God. From this paſſage one has obſerved, "That nothing can be truly and properly an expiation for ſin, but an obedience and ſacrifice, which magnifies the law; all means of reconciliation but one are utterly excluded. And by a repetition of God's diſlike to them, they are moſt vehemently rejected; and that alone which is left, as containing any virtue and efficacy to this end, is Chriſt's coming in the fleſh, and in the form of a ſervant, to do his Father's will." And the reaſon why the righteouſneſs of Chriſt was ſo pleaſing and acceptable to his Father, is intimated to be this, becauſe he *magnified the law*, and thereby *made it honourable.* Thus we ſee, that the nature of the breach, and the ground of the controverſy between God and man, made ſuch a ſatisfaction as this proper and neceſſary.

Iſa. xlii. 21.

4. That the Mediator might magnify the law, his work was *to obey its precepts, and endure its penalties.*

1. *He muſt obey its precepts.* The honour of the law could not be ſecured without an univerſal conformity to all its commands. The ſame authority that enjoin'd obedience in one, enjoin'd it in all. Hence a breach in one inſtance would be equally a diſparagement of that authority with a breach in another. The law requires a perfect obedience, it allows of no defect or imperfection; it preſcribes the manner as well

well as the matter of obedience, and curſes *every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them.* Gal. iii. 10. There was a contempt of the law involved in the very nature of tranſgreſſion. It was this which at firſt forfeited the comfort and peace of the innocent ſtate. We are not to imagine therefore, that a reconciliation with God could ever be obtained without an holineſs commenſurate to the precepts of the law. Had the Mediator attempted a ſatisfaction, without yielding a perfect obedience to the law, he could not have ſucceeded in his office: but inſtead of compoſing a former difference between God and ſinners, he muſt have made a new one between God and himſelf: ſince it was by tranſgreſſion we were brought under the curſe, without a perfect obedience we could not be delivered from it. For this reaſon, when Chriſt took upon him the form of a ſervant, he received the law as the rule of his life. And from the beginning to the end of his days upon earth, ever lived in a perfect agreement with it. *The law of his God was within his heart, and it was his delight to do his will.* Pſ. xl 8. At his entrance upon his publick miniſtry, he acknowledged his obligation to fulfil all righteouſneſs, and openly declared, *He came not to deſtroy the law, but to fulfil it.* Mat. iii. 15. Mat v. 17. His practice did fully correſpond with his profeſſion. His inward temper, as well as his outward behaviour,

was every way suitable to the spirituality and purity of the law. He was perfectly *holy*, altogether *harmless*, and continued ever *undefiled*. His desires, purposes and intentions; his aims, ends and views did all center in God, and ultimately terminate upon him and his glory; his whole course was a perfect transcript of the divine law, without the least spot or blemish. 'Tis as he is God's *righteous servant*, he shall justify many. But had he not been perfectly righteous and holy, he could have justified none.

2. That the law might be fully magnified, *its penalties must be endured*, as well as its precepts obeyed. It was not enough, that the Mediator should be perfectly free from all sin, but to procure reconciliation, *he that knew no sin; must be made sin* for his people, that *they might be made the* righteousness of God in him. He must be treated as if he had been the sinner. The curse must fall upon him, and he must bear it. For this reason he was not only exposed to outward hardships and difficulties in the world, such as poverty, reproach and shame; but he endured the wrath of God in his soul. It was not enough to magnifie the law, that he suffered many sore calamities in his life, the sharpest agony and pain in his death, that his body should be made a sacrifice, and his blood an offering; but his soul must be laden with sorrow, and his spirit fill'd with grief. He was not only to be deserted of his Father,

Father, and be denied thoſe manifeſtations of divine glory and love, which conſtitute the bleſſedneſs and joy of ſaints and angels; but he was for a time to lie under the poſitive impreſſions of the wrath of God, and be bruiſed by juſtice it ſelf. He was to be ſmitten of God, and the ſorrows of the Almighty were to drink up his Spirit. What *Elihu* ſpoke of *Job, God thruſteth him down and not man,* was true in the caſe of our Saviour. It was by the power of the Divine Wrath he was caſt into ſuch an agony in the garden. 'Twas a deluge which fell from heaven, that overwhelmed his ſoul, 'Twas the ſword of the Lord of hoſts that made his deepeſt wounds. The juſtice of God had ſaid, *Awake, Oh ſword, againſt the man that is my fellow.* His ſoul was made an offering for ſin, and ſacrific'd by the hand of divine juſtice. As ſinners are to be puniſh'd by the hand of God himſelf; ſo he that bore the puniſhment due to ſinners, fell into his hand. Oh how dreadful was this, to fall into the hand of the living God! But tho' the Mediator was a Son, yet learned he obedience by ſuch ſufferings as theſe; his buſineſs was to magnifie the law hereby; neither could the juſtice of God be ſatisfied, nor the ſalvation of man ſtand with the honour of God, unleſs the Mediator endur'd ſuch ſufferings as theſe! And that for theſe two reaſons.

Job xxxii. 13.

Zec. xiii. 7.

1. Because *the law did strictly threaten such misery.*

2. Because *this misery was but the just demerit of man's transgression.*

1. *The law did strictly threaten such* misery. This was the true meaning and intention of the curse of the law. 'Tis not a part of man only, much less is it only the outward part that is the subject of the curse of the law; but 'tis the whole man. The curse reaches farther than the ease, or the life of the body. The sentence pronounced in case of disobedience, was, *Dying thou* Gen. ii. 17. *shalt die*, as the words מות תמות, might be rendred. The body is capable of no more than a single death; but the man is capable of two, one in the body, another in the soul. As the separation of the soul from the body is the death of the outward man, so the separation of God from the soul is the death of the inward man. Hence sinners are threatned with a *second death*, which is to be understood of the sorrows of hell, which fall directly on the soul. Thus Christ died in his body, and he died in his soul. It Isa. liii. 9. was propheſied of him, that he should *make his grave with the wicked* in his deaths. The word is plural in the original. Long before he felt any of the pain of his bodily death, he cried out in his desertion, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* It was the design and intention of the threatning, that such dreadful sorrows as these should

ſhould be the puniſhment of ſin. The law lays the greateſt ſtreſs upon the miſeries of the ſoul; for the higheſt outward miſeries have fallen on thoſe that were delivered from the curſe; whereas the moſt curſed ſinners, and the vileſt of men, have eſcaped the moſt dreadful part of temporal and external ſorrow. From whence 'tis evident, that outward trouble is the leaſt thing regarded in the law; and 'tis ſorrow in the ſoul that is moſt directly and chiefly intended. The bittereſt part of the curſe of the law, is *indignation and wrath*; and ſuch indignation, and ſuch wrath, as will inevitably produce the ſoreſt *tribulation and anguiſh*, not to the body only, but upon every *ſoul that doth evil*, and falls under it. Such ſorrows as theſe being really the intention of the curſe, when Chriſt undertook to be Mediator, he engaged to endure them; and without this, the law could not have been ſufficiently magnified. If the moſt dreadful threatnings denounced againſt ſin had not been executed, the honour and reputation of the law had ſunk for ever. Future threatnings would have been of no force, had thoſe that attended the firſt publication of the law been laid aſide, and not made good. This was one reaſon why the Mediator, in order to magnifie the law, muſt endure ſufferings in his ſoul, becauſe the law had ſtrictly threatned ſuch miſery. Again,

2. This

2. *This misery was but the just demerit of sin*; all sin, however committed, deserves much more than a bodily punishment from God. 'Tis only when men have low apprehensions of the evil of sin, that they can imagin an external misery to be a sufficient expiation, or that the death of the body should be a full satisfaction for the sin of the soul. There's many a crime deserves death from man: sure then it must deserve a much sorer punishment from God. A punishment inflicted on the body only, would not be at all suited to the rule of proportion and equity; for in all sin the soul is the principal agent; the body is no more than the instrument. The soul is the main cause of sin; our members are but the weapons of unrighteousness, the war is managed by the soul. The soul is much more the subject of sin than the body. If all the transgressions of a man's life be compared to the sins of his heart, they are no more than a few drops to the boundless ocean. The fountain of sin is within. There's a thousand times more sin conceiv'd in the mind, than ever the body can bring forth into practice. And therefore the Divine displeasure must needs, in a principal manner, break out against the soul. To lay the penalty wholly on the body, when the soul had been mainly guilty, would not be agreeable to the rule of justice.

Now

Now one ſpecial deſign of Chriſt's undertaking to be Mediator was to honour the juſtice of God: And when he had conſented to put his ſoul in our ſouls ſtead, it became proper and neceſſary that he ſhould bear our puniſhment. *The chaſtiſement* of *our peace* being *upon him*, he was to *bear our griefs*, and *carry our ſorrows*. And ſince we were guilty of death, *of death*, in the ſoul, he muſt ſuffer it. And ſuch was the righteouſneſs of the divine nature, that the Father in dealing with Chriſt as Mediator, and as the ſurety of ſinners, could not ſpare him. No, tho' he was his *own* Son, his *only* begotten and *well* beloved, yet he ſpared him not, but fully inſiſted upon every thing that might juſtly be demanded. And this being the requirement of the law, and the demerit of ſin, that the wrath of God ſhould break forth upon the ſoul; the Mediator was treated after this dreadful manner. To ſtand under the wrath of God, when falling upon the ſoul, is hard work, it made him ſweat drops of blood; but ſuch was his zeal for his Father's glory, and his people's ſalvation, that he readily went thro' all, and could ſtill ſay, it was his delight to ſuffer as well as to do his Father's will.

Thus it became the Mediator to magnify the law, by obeying its precepts, and ſubmitting to its penalties, the ſevereſt, the ſharpeſt of them.

(5.) Chriſt's work, as Mediator, *is to make interceſſion for his people.* To this end he aroſe from the dead, aſcended up into heaven, and ſat down at the right hand of God, and there *he ever liveth to make* continual *interceſſion* for them. *He is entered into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.* He intercedes that all the ſpiritual bleſſings, which his death has purchaſed, may be conferr'd upon them, and thus their ſouls be enrich'd with every good thing that is neceſſary to prepare and ripen them for the heavenly ſtate. He pleads for his people, that they may be quickened and made partakers of ſpiritual light and life, that they may be brought into a ſtate of peace, eſtabliſhed and preſerved therein for ever.

Heb. vii. 25.
Heb. ix. 24.

(6.) *Laſtly*, Chriſt's work, as Mediator, *is to bow the hearts of the elect*, and *to turn his people from their iniquities.* Such is the condition of man ſince the fall, that he is blind to his own intereſt, and an enemy to his own happineſs. Tho' a way be open'd thro' the mediation of Chriſt, for man's acceſs to God; yet none, if left to himſelf, will turn to the Lord. Hence it was needful, that beſides all the Mediator had done as a prieſt, in ſatisfying divine juſtice, he ſhould in the diſcharge of his undertaking as the Prophet and King of the church, make *ready a people*, and *prepare them* for the glory his blood has purchas'd.

Accordingly, He by his Word and Spirit convinces his people of their ſin and danger, warns them to flee from the wrath that is to come, ſhews them the only way of deliverance to be through his own righteouſneſs and blood: He quickens them, and enables them to flee to the refuge that is ſet before them: He renews their wills, and draws them with the cords of his love: He ſubdues the pride of their hearts, conquers their luſts and corruptions, and gives them faith in himſelf, and his victories; and thus makes them more than conquerors over their enemies: He gives hungrings and thirſtings after God, and leads into the daily experience of divine favour. He keeps them in a continued dependence upon himſelf, and upholds them in a ſtate of grace till he has wrought in them a meetneſs to be partakers of the heavenly inheritance. At length, as the captain of ſalvation, he conducts them ſafe thro' the territories of death, and puts them into the full and ſure poſſeſſion of eternal glory.

In this method I have attempted a diſtinct view of Chriſt's work, as he is the Mediator between God and ſinners. From what has been ſaid under the foregoing heads, of the nature, greatneſs, and difficulty of the Mediator's work, we may juſtly infer three things,

1. There is the greateſt occaſion for us *to bewail the evil of our apoſtacy from God,* and

and *rebellion against him.* What sad work has sin made! How wide a difference has this created between God and man! What a difficult matter was it to make reconciliation! We see what condescension, what humiliation and abasement, what agonies and sorrows it has cost the Mediator, to make up the breach. Let the consideration of these things be improved to heighten our apprehensions of the evil of sin, and engage us to a more penitent and humble acknowledgment of our vile offence, which made such an office and work as this, necessary that our souls might be saved from endless misery.

How seldom is it that we take due observation of our sin and guilt, or have our hearts rightly affected with it? But did we in the actings of faith review more frequently and closely what great humiliation was hereby occasioned to Christ, the Mediator, it would be the most effectual means of humbling us under the remembrance of our iniquities. Ought we to mourn when we have occasioned sorrow to a kind friend, to a near relative, or a Christian brother? And shall we not mourn that we have done this to Christ? It becomes us indeed, to mourn over sin, as it is a dishonour to God, as his justice has been provok'd, and the life of our souls forfeited thereby; but withal we should remember that we can never mourn aright, till this becomes a spring of sorrow, that

that Chriſt, the Mediator, was wounded for our tranſgreſſions.

Among all the arguments of ſorrow mentioned in ſcripture, this ſeems to be expreſt with the ſtrongeſt accent in that paſſage of the prophet, *They ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced;* it follows, *they ſhall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only ſon, and ſhall be in bitterneſs for him, as one that is in bitterneſs for his firſt-born.* To a divine ſoul the ſufferings of Chriſt, eſpecially the ſufferings of his ſoul, are moſt affecting things. Theſe melt it moſt, and draw out the kindeſt ſorrows. When one that is become a new creature hears or reads of the humiliation and abaſement of the great Mediator, he is ready to ſay, Did my bleſſed Lord bear ſuch a load of miſery, ſuch a weight of divine wrath? Did he ſuffer the moſt dreadful curſe, and did he endure all this for ſin, for my ſin? Oh! then let me hate it; let my ſoul mortally and eternally hate ſin, as that which was the procuring cauſe of all his griefs. Zech. xii. 10.

2.) We may infer that this work could never be accompliſh'd by a mere creature. Who among creatures of the higheſt rank was fit to undertake it? The firſt thing the Mediator was to engage in, was to make peace, by preſenting a ſatisfactory oblation, and an atoning ſacrifice. This was the only foundation upon which reconciliation could be effected. Who then among created be-

ings was able to interpose on the behalf of sinners? The best of them depend upon the divine goodness and condescension for their own acceptance; how then should they venture to appear in the presence of an angry God to procure acceptance for others? Could any of these have born our griefs, or carried our sorrows for us? Or if the chastisement of our peace had been upon any of them, could their stripes have been our healing? Had they engag'd to have laid down their life for us? Could they have taken it again? Would the most exquisite sorrows of a mere creature have been sufficient to satisfy the justice of a God, or to atone for an offence committed against an infinite Majesty? And yet unless this had been done, whoever had stood in the place of a Mediator could not have been taken from prison, or from judgment? And if the surety could not make a full payment to secure his own release, how was it to be expected that a discharge should be granted to those for whom he was responsible? Let the nature and greatness of the work of a Mediator be consider'd, according to the representation we have given of it from scripture, and the conclusion must be, that in the whole creation there was none equal to it, none fit to be entrusted with it.

3. We may infer, that there is the highest reason for us to admire the kindness, condescension, and love of the Lord Jesus Christ, who

who chearfully undertook and went through all. We count it great love when any pity us in our ſorrows, and mourn with us in our afflictions; but to what degree is this love heighten'd in Chriſt, who took our ſorrows upon him, and put his ſoul in our ſouls ſtead, and choſe the moſt bitter agonies, that we might have the ſweeteſt joys! The height of his kindneſs appears in the depth of the miſery he bore for us. The threatnings of the law had their full diſcharge upon him, there was no abatement; He was not ſpared in any part of the curſe no not in the foreſt.

What curſe like an alienation from God or a ſeparation from him? To be baniſh'd from the glory of his preſence is the height of the torments in hell. This is the miſery that we had deſerv'd; and this the miſery that Chriſt ſuffer'd in his agonies; and herein it was that he gave the ſtrongeſt proof of his love. All things elſe were tolerable, but all the angels in heaven could not have endur'd this. Let this then engage our holy admiration: Oh! let ſoul and body be given to him who hath ſuffer'd in ſoul and body for us; as he ſuffer'd for us in both, let it be our care to ſerve him in both; and as he made his ſoul an offering for ſin, let our ſouls be made offerings of praiſe. His griefs which he ſuffered for us ſhould work us up to that grateful temper that no obedience ſhould be grievous to us.

But the reasonableness of such a return as this may be represented with greater advantage, when we have shewn his peculiar fitness for the work; for it must doubtless enhance his kindness when we remember that he interpos'd on our behalf, when none but himself could perform such an office for us.

Having insisted distinctly upon several parts of the Mediator's work; I shall now proceed

II. *To evince Christ's singular fitness for the work.* And I shall endeavour to set forth this fitness,

1. As it results *from the constitution of his person:*

2. As it results from the *peculiar relation he stands in both to God and his people.*

1. Christ's fitness for the work of a Mediator may be set forth, as it results *from the constitution of his person or from what he* is *himself.*

In this respect Christ differs from all others. The constitution of his person being singular and peculiar to himself, for he is both God and man; he has all the powers and perfections of Godhead, with all the sinless infirmities and affections of humanity. He truly partakes of both natures, the divine and human, and is as really the Son of God as the Son of man. The same person who is the man Christ Jesus, is indeed *God over all,*

all, bleſſed for ever: He is both together, without ſeparation, without mixture or confuſion, and yet with real diſtinction. For the properties of one nature are never to be attributed to the other. Yet his perſon being undivided the properties of both belong to him.

But the diſtinction, union, and glory of his two natures have been more largely inſiſted on in the preceding diſcourſes of my brethren. It is my buſineſs now to ſhew wherein the conſtitution of his perſon gave him a fitneſs for his work, as Mediator between God and ſinners.

And for the more full diſplay of Chriſt's fitneſs for his work, under this head, I ſhall give a diſtinct repreſentation of it,

(1.) As it reſults *from his human nature:*

(2.) As it reſults *from his divine nature:* and,

(3.) As it reſults from *the conjunction or union of both.*

(1.) Chriſt's fitneſs for the work of a Mediator *reſults from his human nature.* And here it will appear both in his *humanity itſelf*, and from the *peculiar manner* in which he aſſum'd this nature.

[1.] Chriſt's fitneſs for his work, as Mediator, *appears in his humanity itſelf.* For by reaſon of this he was capable of giving that kind of ſatisfaction which was required, that peace might be made, and ſalvation ſecured.

When I was ſpeaking to the work of the

Mediator, I told you that he was to give satisfaction to the offended Majesty, by magnifying the law, thro' an obedience to its precepts, and a subjection to its penalties. Now without a proper humanity, he would have been capable of neither. In this, both his active and passive obedience were founded.

It was only in his flesh he stood in the condition of a creature. And this is the only condition that will admit of obedience. His divine nature is the proper object of the deepest reverence and homage; it was impossible this should ever be the subject of obedience. It was then by reason of his manhood only that he was suited to sustain the character of a servant, and capacitated for paying those special acts of worship and adoration, which the law required. Therein only was he fitted to pass thro' the various stages and circumstances of life, and all that abasement of an humble state, in which his obedience was to be testified, and all his meritorious service perform'd.

Again, without a proper humanity, the *chastisement of our peace* could never have been upon him. The poverty, reproach and shame; the pain, agonies and death that were to be inflicted as the penalty of the law, could never be endur'd or felt by any but one that was truly man. Christ was therefore *made of a woman*, that he might be made *under the law*. All sorrow and grief is utterly incompatible with a divine

nature;

nature; nor could any nature entirely and purely ſpiritual, have born the ſufferings which were the peculiar puniſhment of man's tranſgreſſion; for *without ſhedding of blood there was no remiſſion*; for this reaſon muſt the Mediator be made lower than the angels, and take on him the nature of the ſeed of *Abraham*, that he might have blood to ſhed. He muſt firſt be a child born, that he might be the Lamb ſlain. Heb. ix. 22.

[2.] Chriſt's fitneſs for his work, as Mediator, *appears from the peculiar manner in which he aſſumed the human nature:* for hereby he was juſtly exempted from all defilement; and this was neceſſary, or otherwiſe the law could not have been magnify'd by him.

The manner in which he aſſum'd the human nature was peculiar and wonderful. He was the ſeed of the woman, that he might be really and properly a deſcendant from *Adam*, but was born of a virgin, that he might be ſecured from all taint and corruption. His miraculous conception gave him a juſt exemption from all defilement. The guilt of *Adam*'s firſt tranſgreſſion was not devolved upon him as it was upon others, thro' a federal relation; he was not a party concern'd in the firſt covenant, as is every one that deſcends from *Adam* by ordinary generation. Being born of a virgin, he never lay in the loins of a man; and for this reaſon was not liable to the imputation of

guilt upon the like account as we are. It was only by virtue of his own consent, and voluntary agreement, as the head of the church, and the Saviour of his body, that any iniquity was laid upon him. Hence there never was the least seed of corruption, or principle of sin in his nature: No root upon which any actual inclination to sin could ever grow. Neither did the law require that this seed of the woman should be so far deserted as to be left destitute of those divine succours, which would be a sufficient and constant preservative against the venom and poison of the devil's temptations.

Christ was then the very man, the exigence of our case requir'd. He was made like unto his brethren in all things that were essential and proper to our nature. He had a true humanity, that he might be in a condition which would admit of his shedding blood, and suffering death to make reconciliation for the sins of his people. He had a manhood clothed with all blameless infirmities, that he might be touch'd with a feeling of ours, and yet was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;* that there might be no need of a sacrifice for any sins of his own. Without our nature he would have had no gift or sacrifice at all to offer; without the spotless purity of our nature he would have had none to present that could have been accepted. Thus we see that by his human nature, and the absolute purity of it,

Christ

Chriſt was fitted for that part of his mediatorial work, which required his obedience, abaſement, or humiliation.

(2.) Chriſt's fitneſs for the work of a Mediator *reſults from his Divine Nature.*

I have already obſerv'd, that Chriſt is God as well as man. I ſhall here farther obſerve, that his Divine Nature is no more intended to be excluded from an immediate concern in his mediatorial office, by his being termed in the text, *The man Chriſt Jeſus,* than his human nature is deſign'd to be excluded from ſuffering, when, with reſpect to his crucifixion, he is ſtiled the Lord of Glory. Tho' a manhood was neceſſary, yet that *alone* could never be ſufficient for the mighty work he had undertaken, which was to make reconciliation, to purge our ſins, to purchaſe the Church, to open a way for our comfortable acceſs to God, to bring us into, and preſerve us in a ſtate of friendſhip and love. All this was to be done, notwithſtanding the corruption and enmity of our nature, in ſpite of the moſt violent aſſaults, and powerful oppoſition of helliſh adverſaries: but as a foundation for all theſe glorious atchievements, the law muſt be magnified.

Now, as I ſhewed under the foregoing head, that it was upon the account of the human nature of Chriſt, that he was in a condition that would admit of any obedience at all; ſo under this I would ſhew that it

was by virtue of his Divine Nature, that he was capable of magnifying the law thro' his obedience and subjection to it.

To this purpose we may take notice of two things.

[1.] It was the Divine Nature of Christ *that secur'd the high perfection of his obedience under his peculiar and most difficult circumstances.*

[2.] It was the Divine Nature of Christ *that devolv'd upon his perfect obedience, that Glory which was its sufficience to magnify the law.*

[1.] It was the Divine Nature of Christ *that secur'd the high perfection of his obedience, under his peculiar and most difficult circumstances.* There was nothing more difficult in the Mediator's work, than to keep up the highest exercise of Grace, while he sustained the most violent storms of wrath the justice of heaven could pour upon him. 'Tis certain, none has an arm like God, or can thunder with a voice like him. He can more easily cut off the spirit of princes, than the roaring of a lion can make the beasts of the forest tremble, none of the angelick nature can stand before him, when once he is angry. *The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof.* When wicked men are scorched with the heat of his fiery anger, they blaspheme his name; and when the best of men have been under the hidings of his counte-

Job xxvi. 11.

countenance, and the fearful apprehenſions of his diſpleaſure, the moſt bitter lamentations have been extorted; *While they ſuffer his terrors, they are diſtracted.* But ſuch were the perfections of Chriſt, that the wrath which made ſome blaſpheme, and which threw others into the moſt dreadful confuſion, could never produce in him the leaſt ſinful diſorder. Under all the bitterneſs of death in his body, and the ſharpeſt agonies in his ſoul, he never had one unbecoming thought of God, nor fail'd in the exerciſe of any grace, but always kept up an holy confidence, and unſhaken truſt in him, ſtill claiming his relation, and juſtifying the proceedings of God in executing the ſoreſt judgments upon himſelf, as the ſurety of his people. All the time the fierceneſs of Divine Wrath was paſſing over him, he gave God reverence, with holy affection and perfect love. Pſalm lxxxviii. 15.

The devil in the mean while imployed the utmoſt of his skill and power to draw him into ſin. Satan was buſy with his helliſh arts, tempting our Saviour to put a falſe conſtruction upon God's dealings, and to draw wrong concluſions from preſent diſpenſations. The leaſt compliance herewith had deſtroyed all the virtue of his ſacrifice, render'd his oblation unſavoury, and turned his offering into a freſh provocation. But the perfections of his Godhead were his abundant ſecurity. His infinite wiſdom made

made light arise in the midst of darkness, and chased away the gloomy shades of providence, by means whereof the devil attempted to mislead him. His infinite power sustained and preserved him in an intire resignation, and most perfect exercise of patience under those heavy shocks of Divine Vengeance, which would have sunk angels, as well as men, into an irrecoverable state of misery and ruin. But Christ's strength was equal to the vengeance of the Judge, and he was able to sustain, as well as receive the wrath of heaven, and to bear all, without any impatient murmuring, or sinful complaint. Hereby the utmost perfection of the law was answered, its most spiritual and difficult injunctions being exactly observ'd, while, at the same time all its most dreadful denunciations, and terrible threatnings of wrath were fully executed. But farther,

[2.] It was the Divine Nature of Christ *that devolv'd upon his obedience, that Glory which was its sufficience to magnify the law.*

For in his subjection there was a judgment *practically* given concerning the law, that it was *holy, just, and good,* by a person of infinite perfections, one whose wisdom and penetration could have discern'd, and whose righteousness and justice would have detected any blemish, or defect in the law, could there have been the least injustice in its re-

quirements, the leaſt ſeverity or hardſhip in its commands to have been complain'd of. ſo that the honour which was done to the law, thro' a teſtimony borne by the ſubjection and blood of a righteous and holy *Jeſus*, was ſufficient to confront all the diſgrace that was caſt upon it by the rebellion of weak and ſinful *man:* yea, the judgment of Chriſt, who was a perſon truly divine, muſt be infinitely more valuable, than the ſentiments of all created beings. Hereby the law was abundantly magnified, and the attributes of God which had been impeached, traduced, and ſlandered by man's rebellion, were all vindicated, exalted, and glorified, thro' the obedience and ſufferings of this infinite Mediator; and herein the juſtice of God had a proper and complete ſatisfaction, a full compenſation being made for the wrong which ſin had done to the honour of God.

Here was a reſtitution perfectly adequate, and fully commenſurate to the perfection of the law, and all the infinite Glories of him that gave it. Herein the Divine juſtice finds a reſt, and thus the wrath of God was fully appeaſed. His juſt reſentment, upon the account of ſin, could deſire no more to vindicate his honour, in embracing in the arms of his mercy and love, all that are ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt's atoning ſacrifice. Thro' the righteouſneſs of

of this Mediator, grace shall reign to eternal life. Peace and reconciliation being established upon such a foot of righteousness and equity; God is now equally just in being the justifier of them that believe in Jesus; as in condemning those that finally continue in their impenitence and unbelief.

Thus we see, that from the Divine Nature of Christ, arose the compleatness of his capacity to magnify the law, and make a full reparation for the injury done to the divine honour by the transgression of fallen man.

From what has been said under this and the foregoing head,

WE MAY LEARN,

That the denial of Christ's humanity, and the denial of his proper Deity, are errors equally dangerous and fatal in their consequence.

To deny his manhood, or the reality of his human nature, is to destroy the *truth* of his sacrifice. To deny his Godhead, or the glory of his Divine Nature, is to destroy its *virtue*. The consequence of either of which must be to take away his satisfaction. And this is subversive of the whole Gospel, which lays all the weight of salvation upon Christ, as *our passover*, *who* was *sacrificed for us*, and *who gave himself for us*, *an offering*

fering and a ſacrifice to God, for a ſweet ſmelling ſavour. And his fitneſs for this aroſe not merely from his human nature, nor merely from his divine; but from the conjunction or union of both. Which is to have a particular conſideration in the enſuing diſcourſe. Eph. v. 2.

The End of the firſt Sermon.

CHRIST

CHRIST a fit MEDIATOR

BETWEEN

GOD and SINNERS.

1 TIM. ii. 5.

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

SERM. II. preach'd *December* 6, 1728.

IN speaking to these words, we have already consider'd the work of a Mediator between God and men, and enter'd upon the consideration of Christ's fitness for this work, as it arises from the wonderful constitution of his person. To this purpose we have taken a view of each nature *distinctly*. I shall now proceed to consider both *conjunctly*. For,

3. *Christ's fitness for his work, arises from the conjunction or union of his two natures.*

There are many things relating to this union of two natures in the person of the Mediator, which we cannot comprehend; but from

from the language of ſcripture we may eaſily learn ſo much concerning it, as to know, that when God, in the perſon of the Son, was manifeſted in the fleſh, neither the Father nor the Holy Ghoſt aſſumed our nature, but the Word alone.

There is no occaſion therefore for any to object, "That if the Mediator acted as God, "and yet did mediate with God, and re- "concile us to God, he might then be ſaid "to mediate with himſelf, and reconcile us "to himſelf."

I think it is ſufficient to reply to this, that as there is an order in the perſonal ſubſiſtence of the ſacred Three, ſo there is an order in their various operations, and in the diſtinct concern they have, with reſpect to the ſalvation of the choſen. Now it appears from the revelation of the goſpel, that according to the œconomy agreed upon in the eternal tranſactions and ſettlements of the everlaſting covenant, the Father was to ſuſtain the character of Majeſty, and bear the title of Rector and Judge of all, while the Son was to be the only Redeemer of his people; and in order thereunto, the only Mediator between God and man: But his having communion in the Godhead does no more deſtroy his perſonal diſtinction from the offended Judge, than his accepting the relation of a federal head, or aſſuming the nature of his people, made him ceaſe to be a perſon diſtinct from them. And when this

point

point is once set in a light agreeable to the account given of it in the Word, the objection must lose its design, if not wholly fall to the ground.

I shall go on therefore to what I propos'd under this head, which was to shew how the conjunction of the two natures in the person of Christ, did fit him for his mediatorial work. An illustration of this matter shall be attempted under the following heads.

1. *This union laid the foundation for a communication of properties. That is*, from this union it became reasonable and proper that the peculiar perfections and properties of his Godhead, and that the peculiar properties, actions, and passions of his manhood, should each of them be particularly attributed and appropriated to his person. The union of his two natures was so strict and close, that nothing could be attributed unto, or affirmed of either, but the same might be justly said of his person. From whence it follows, that his person was at the same time the subject of the highest perfection, dignity, and glory; and yet truly the subject of the most humble obedience, and entire submission. Hence,

2. *By reason of this union a glory was devolv'd upon all the obedience and sufferings of the Mediator.* This union being a foundation for the communication of properties, it is now agreeable to the utmost propriety

of ſpeech, to aſſert that the bleſſed Jeſus, who fulfill'd all righteouſneſs, was infinitely, as well as perfectly juſt and holy. This union is a ſure ground upon which we may affirm, concerning the head that was crown'd with thorns, the face which the ſoldiers rudely ſpit upon; the ſide that was pierced; the hands and feet which were nail'd to the croſs; the fleſh that was ſlain, and the blood which was ſhed; that theſe were truly the bodily parts, and really the fleſh and blood of the *Prince of Life*, and *Lord of Glory:* The dignity of whoſe perſon convey'd a Glory unto all his obedience, and all his ſufferings. For which reaſon we may well conclude, that the expreſſion is not figurative, nor the language improper, when 'tis ſaid, that God *purchas'd* the *church with his own blood.* This was true in the moſt plain and natural ſenſe of the words, in as much as the infinite glories of Godhead did truly and properly belong to that Jeſus of *Nazareth*, who was crucify'd upon the mount. And tho' it's never to be ſaid that the Divine Nature of Chriſt ſuffer'd, or the Godhead died, yet it may be properly ſaid, that the perſon who ſuffer'd and died was truly God; and thro' the vertue of the Divine Nature of Chriſt, a full ſatisfaction was given to offended juſtice, by the ſuffering of his human. For the ſatisfaction which is given to God for the violation of his law, takes its meaſure from the ſubject that gives it.

Acts xx. 28.

And this ſhews us the reaſon why it was impoſſible for any mere creature to make ſatisfaction for ſin, namely, becauſe a creature, tho' one of the moſt exalted condition that can be conceiv'd, could not poſſibly be more than a finite ſubject of obedience; and the higheſt and moſt perfect obedience of ſuch a ſubject, could bear no proportion to the evil of ſin, which having the infinite perfection and majeſty of God, to be the meaſure and rule of its account, muſt riſe or amount to an infinite evil; yea, had Chriſt himſelf been but a creature, after the fulleſt unction he could then have receiv'd from the Spirit of Grace and Holineſs, his obedience and ſacrifice had ſtill been the oblation of one that was but finite; and in point of real ſatisfaction or proper atonement would have then avail'd no more than did the blood of bulls or of goats.

3.) *It was this union that ſecur'd the Mediator's deliverance from all his abaſement.*

The releaſe of the Mediator *from priſon, and from judgment* was neceſſary, the deſign of ſalvation had miſcarried without it. If the Mediator had not firſt procur'd deliverance for himſelf, he had attempted in vain the ſalvation of others: Had death reign'd over him, it had for ever triumph'd over all his people: Had the head been detain'd as a priſoner, there had been no room to hope for the eſcape of his members.

But

But when Christ *was taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain,* yet *could he not be holden of death,* no, tho' he bore *the sins of many!* Such was the *sweet smelling savour,* arising from *the sacrifice and offering* which he presented *to God, thro' the eternal Spirit;* that he was quickly *rais'd up, the pains of death being loos'd.* The great work of atonement being finish'd hereby, it was not *possible* he should continue in the grave any longer than was necessary to evidence the reality or certainty of his death. Acts ii. 23, 24. Heb. ix. 28.

But then we are here to remember, that the resurrection of the dead body of Christ was owing to the union of his human nature with his divine; for it was his Godhead which convey'd that infinite merit unto his oblation, whereby it became satisfactory: and without this satisfactoriness of his oblation, the body which he offer'd, could not have been rais'd, the justice of God would have forbidden it; a slur had been cast upon the righteousness of the judge, had the surety been discharg'd before the debt had been fully paid. The same difficulties that lay in the way of a reconciliation for sinners, without the interposition of a Mediator at first, would still have continued as a bar of peace, had not the Mediator made full compensation. The considerations which made it necessary there should be any payment at all,

would not admit of a compoſition at laſt, or ſuffer the leaſt abatement.

Under theſe difficulties Chriſt was a fit Mediator; for he being both God and man, he had not only a body that he might be liable to an impriſonment in the grave, but was likewiſe poſſeſſed of thoſe riches of glory, which abundantly ſecured his releaſe and diſcharge.

And the eternity of ſufferings is not eſſential to the puniſhment that is due for ſin. This only ariſes from the incapacity of him that ſuffers to give a full ſatisfaction. As in the caſe of debtors, the length of an impriſonment, is occaſioned by the want of a full payment. But Chriſt, thro' the vertue of his divine nature, was able *to put away ſin* fully and wholly, *by the ſacrifice of himſelf*; when he offer'd his body, he did it
Rom. vi. 9. *once for all*, and *being raiſed from the dead*, he *dieth no more*. Death hath no more dominion over him, when the courſe of his obedience upon earth was ended, as ſoon as he expired and gave up the ghoſt, the great work of atonement and ſatisfaction was finiſhed and perfected for ever; for which
Heb. x. 12. reaſon, *This man, after he had offered one ſacrifice for ſins, for ever ſat down on the right hand of God*. Thus we ſee how the conjunction of his two natures ſecured the Mediator's deliverance from all his abaſement. Farther,

4. This union *ſecured his entrance into Glory*. That

That the work of a Mediator might be fully diſcharg'd, his entring into Glory was of equal neceſſity with his ſuffering. This is plainly intimated in that queſtion of our Lord, *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his Glory?* It was but one part of his work that was finiſh'd on earth, there was another to be continued and carried on in heaven. The application of the bleſſings he purchas'd, was to be his care, as well as the purchaſe it ſelf; all communications of divine mercy and favour are made thro' him. Whoever are made partakers of the heavenly grace, they receive it *according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.* His aſcenſion therefore, and entrance into glory, was neceſſary, that he might receive gifts for men, and beſtow them on the heirs of ſalvation. He muſt enter into *heaven it ſelf*, and there appear *in the preſence of God*, to plead the efficacy of his ſacrifice, on the behalf of his church; that in the virtue of his blood the Spirit might be given, and a diſtribution be made of all ſpiritual bleſſings.

Luk. xxiv. 26.

Eph. iv. 7.

He was to enter in a moſt publick and glorious manner, as a victorious Head, and a ſucceſsful Captain of ſalvation. Before he could enter, he muſt *lead captivity captive*, ſpoil principalities and powers, make a ſhew of them openly, and triumph over all their aſſaults.

Can it then be imagin'd, that Christ could enter into the immediate and glorious presence of God, under this high character of a Mediator, upon such an important errand, and thro' the midst of such vast opposition, unless he had been both God and man. The scriptures assure us, that it was by blood, Heb. ix. 12. *not the blood of goats, or of calves, but by his own blood he entred into the holy place.* But how could this have gain'd him admittance, had not an infinite value been stamp'd upon his sufferings, by the conjunction of his human nature with his divine? and since it was thro' the virtue of this union, that he was able to discharge himself of the load of iniquity, which, with his own consent, was laid upon him, it must of consequence be thro' the same union that he obtain'd a boldness to enter into the holiest of the heavenly temple, or into the immediate presence of God above: for unless he had appear'd at his ascension *without sin,* tho' he had approach'd to the very gates of heaven, entrance would have been denied him.

But being both God and man, the dignity of his Divine Nature open'd a clear passage for the ascension of his human thro' all heavens, even unto the throne of God. In regard of the infinite excellency of his Deity, the voice was utter'd as the command of justice, as well as the cry of love, Ps. xxiv. 7---10. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of*

of Glory ſhall come in. And the reaſon of this acclamation was, becauſe he was found worthy to *aſcend into the hill of the Lord, and to ſtand in his holy place*: and when once ſuch a *voice* as this *came to him from the excellent Glory*, concerning his entrance in, all the united force of the legions of hell could not prevent it. If theſe adverſaries be conſider'd as the executioners of Divine Wrath, thus they were diſarm'd of their *power of death*, thro' the Mediator's ſubmitting to endure it: or, if they be conſider'd as the implacable enemies of the Redeemer's honour, and his people's happineſs, thus they were intirely vanquiſh'd by the ſuperior ſtrength of *the King of Glory*, as he was *the Lord ſtrong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battel.*

In as much therefore as Chriſt was to make his way to Glory both thro' ſacrifice and triumph, we have reaſon to conclude, that his entrance was ſecured by the union of his two natures: For tho', if he had been without his human he had wanted a ſacrifice to offer, or if he had been without his divine he had wanted an arm ſufficient to conquer; yet as he was God-man, he had both, and wanted neither.

5. *From this union aroſe a fitneſs in Chriſt to receive and exerciſe all power in heaven and earth.*

It was neceſſary the Mediator ſhould be inveſted with all regal authority, have *power*

given him over all flesh, and be made *head over all things to the church*. For he was *to gather together in one* all the children of God, that were scatter'd abroad throughout the world.

These must be deliver'd from the slavery of sin, rescu'd from the vassalage of Satan, and made *a willing people in the day of* Christ's *power*. These must be reclaim'd, quickned to new obedience, strengthned in spiritual service, supported under temptations, and enabled to walk humbly with their God. They must likewise be protected and defended in their way to *Sion*, made successful in their conflicts with men and devils; yea, and with their more dangerous enemies, the corruption and pride of their own hearts. They must be enabled to *fight the good fight of faith*, under all the trials of life, and be made victorious, at last, over death itself, the king of terrors. Their bodies must be rais'd from the grave, and their persons be presented blameless and without spot, at Christ's second coming. And they must be wrought up to all this glory, thro' the strength of the Mediator.

For this purpose, *all power* was *given him in heaven and earth*. But had he not been man he could not have receiv'd it, or had he not been God, he could not have rightly us'd it. The gift was made to his person, but the bestowment or communication did terminate upon his manhood. It

was

was with reſpect to this only he was capable of an increaſe in power and honour. Such was the ſovereignty and Fulneſs of his Godhead, that an acceſſion to its authority or Glory was impoſſible; but being God-man, the ſame perſon was capable of receiving, and fit to be entruſted with the higheſt power, an univerſal dominion, and abſolute rule.

6.) From the union of his two natures, the Mediator *had a fitneſs for the ſucceſsful management of his interceſſion in heaven.*

Had he been *God* only, the buſineſs and work of an Interceſſor had been below *him:* For he was thus equal to the God with whom he was to intercede; had he been *man* only, he had been below the *work*, and not fit to appear in the glorious preſence of the Majeſty of heaven upon ſuch an errand; but thro' the union of his two natures he was equal to the work, and yet the work not unworthy of him.

Thro' the omniſcience of his Divine Nature, he perfectly knows who the perſons are that were choſen by God, to be the heirs of ſalvation; he knows who were appointed unto glory, of old, and muſt be effectually call'd and brought thither in time. He knows what is the ſtate, what the condition and exigence of every one that belongs to that number. He knows what are the ſpecial privileges and bleſſings, what the abundant ſupplies of grace, and ſingular meaſures

of

of the gifts of the Spirit, which are allotted for them here, and what the degrees and heights of glory, which are appointed for them hereafter. There is no danger therefore of his asking amiss, by his interceding for any thing that would not be agreeable to his Father's will.

Thro' the perfection of his Deity he fully understands, in all the most difficult and intricate cases, what will eventually be for the highest manifestation of the divine Glory, and the effectual security of his people's welfare, and is infinitely faithful in things pertaining to God; while infinitely merciful in things pertaining to them. As man he is experimentally *touch'd with a feeling of their infirmities*, and has a most sensible remembrance of all their sorrows, sufferings, and wants. Hence his intercession is manag'd with all the compassion and sympathy his state will admit of, or their condition can require. Thro' this union the same person hath the affection of a *man*, to compassionate their case; and the power of a *God* to relieve them. Since he has a nature truly human, we may be assur'd of his ever owning the persons and cause of his people: And since he has a nature truly divine, we may be assur'd of God's owning him, and all those on whose behalf he intercedes.

From such considerations as these, I think it sufficiently appears, that the conjunction

or union of the Divine Nature with the human, in the perſon of Chriſt, gave him a peculiar fitneſs for his mediatorial work.

Having now conſider'd his *fitneſs* for this work, as it ariſes from the wonderful conſtitution of his perſon: I ſhall next conſider it,

2. As it reſults from *the peculiar relation he ſtands in, both to God and his people.*

1. *Chriſt's fitneſs to be Mediator ariſes from his relation to God;* this appears in that

1. *Hereby an order was preſerv'd in the various operations of the Sacred Three.*

The relation Chriſt ſtands in to God, is that of a *Son,* which title belongs to him, on the account of his ſupreme pre-exiſtent nature; or his eternal intrinſick relation to the Father. Chriſt being the Son of God, He is the ſecond perſon in the Godhead, and next in order to the Father: He was fit therefore to ſuſtain the character of a Mediator, whoſe work was to be ſubſequent to the work of the Father.

From the current of ſcripture we learn, there is an order obſerv'd in the ſeveral functions and operations of the bleſſed Trinity, correſpondent and agreeable to the order of their ſubſiſtence; and the beauty of their actings required it.

In the order of nature, the Father is before the Son; accordingly the works that are aſcribed to the Father, are antecedent

or

or prior to the works which are more immediately attributed to the Son. Creation must precede redemption: for creatures could not be redeem'd before they did exist. It was therefore agreeable, that the Father should sustain the character of Creator, Rector, and Legislator; and that the Son should be Redeemer; and so it was congruous, that the application of the efficacy of redemption, which must be consequent to redemption it self, should be the work of the holy Spirit, whose function or operation, according to his order of subsistence, was to be after the operation of the Father or the Son.

There was then the greatest congruity in the Son's bearing this office, which would not have been suitable for any of the Divine Persons but himself alone. It was not proper that the Father, who bore the character of the great *Lawgiver*, should be the *Mediator:* because it was not suitable, that he who gave the law as Rector and Lord of all, should stand in the room and place of him that broke it, which would have been the case, had the Father been the Mediator. Nor was it fit that the Spirit should be appointed to this office; for then the Son must have been sent to apply the redemption, and thus the order in which the Divine Persons subsist in the Godhead had been disturbed, and broken in their operations; whereas in the Son's being the Mediator,

'tis

'tis preſerv'd intire, with the greateſt harmony and correſpondence. Again,

That there was a fitneſs in Chriſt to be the Mediator ariſing from his relation to God, appears

2. *In the ſure grounds which it contain'd of the Father's confidence in him.*

As the original deſign or contrivance of this work was the Father's, ſo it did of right belong to him to pitch upon the Perſon that ſhould be imploy'd therein. And the great thing which he aimed at in chooſing a Mediator, was the advancement of his own Glory, in the certainty of his people's ſalvation. This was the only thing by which his choice was govern'd and directed. Now, the Father could no where find a perſon ſo likely to ſecure theſe ends as his own Son; he was the *chiefeſt among ten thouſand*, and *choſen* out *of the* people. Cant. vi. 10. The Omniſcience of God diſcern'd an incapacity for the work in all beings that could poſſibly be created, but it eternally beheld a compleat ability in his Son. It ſaw that unchangeable faithfulneſs in him, which render'd him worthy the higheſt truſt. So great was the faithfulneſs of Chriſt, that when he had once ſtricken hands, he could never ſeek to be releas'd: and this immutability of his faithfulneſs might be relied on, becauſe of the perfection of his underſtanding; which being infinite, he could ſee from the beginning to the

the end of things; ſo that no appearance of freſh oppoſition in his work could ever ſtartle him, nor could any unexpected difficulty ever happen to ſurprize him. He had a vaſt compaſs of thought, an infinite reach, whereby he could penetrate into the moſt diſtant and future things, and into all their circumſtances, connections and dependencies; he could obſerve all events in their original ſpring, as well as in their immediate cauſes.

Hence it was impoſſible that any new face of things ſhould vary his deſign, change his reſolution, or alter his purpoſe; but this was abſolutely and eternally the ſame, *without any variableneſs, or ſhadow of turning.*

And hence his promiſe to *come in the fleſh*, to viſit this lower world and tabernacle here among men, his engagement to do the will of God, *in fulfilling all righteouſneſs, in giving his back to the ſmiters, and making his ſoul an offering for ſin*; his compact in theſe and all other articles in which he covenanted with his Father, might be depended upon with the greateſt ſecurity. When once his word was paſt, the accompliſhment was as certain as if the fact had then been over.

His agreement therefore to ſtand in the place of his people, to bear their iniquities, to be ſlain and ſacrificed for them, was thro' all preceding ages a ſure foundation, upon which the weight of God's glory and the

the church's ſalvation might ſafely be ventur'd, down to the fulneſs of the time appointed for the incarnation, ſufferings, and death of this Mediator. Never was there any to be found beſides himſelf that was fit to be ſo far truſted: But he was, and he punctually fulfill'd his engagements, anſwered all the expectations, and higheſt confidence of his Father, who thereupon, at his aſcenſion, put into his hands all government and rule, both in heaven and earth, in full aſſurance that all would be imploy'd in a ſubſervience to the great and glorious ends for which his office was appointed.

But the confidence which the Father plac'd in Chriſt, with reſpect to theſe matters of the moſtgrand importance, was built upon his peculiar relation, as his own and only Son, who according to his neceſſary and eternal generation ever had a communion in all the eſſential attributes and infinite perfections of the Godhead. And the Father knew that for this reaſon the Son, who was to bear this office, had the ſame unchangeable faithfulneſs with himſelf who call'd him to it; and was therefore more worthy of the glory of being intruſted in this work than any creature of the higheſt rank; for tho' ſuch a one might be faithful in his obedience to the utmoſt of his capacity, yet herein muſt he fall infinitely ſhort of the faithfulneſs of Chriſt, who acted up to all the boundleſs perfections, and infinite glories of an eternal Son.

Farther, as Christ was the Son of God, he was perfectly acquainted with all the rights of Deity, and could infallibly discover every instance in which they were invaded. He had an infinite zeal for his Father's glory, and was capable of the highest and most quick resentment of any injury done against his honour. He lov'd the Father with all the infinite perfection wherewith the Father lov'd himself. He had the same high esteem for the law as the Father had, and was equally regardful that its precepts should be obey'd, its threatnings discharg'd; and thus its honour secur'd, and fully preserv'd. He bore the like hatred and indignation against sin, and chose to have the divine displeasure expresst by those severe and terrible methods, in that high degree and boundless measure, which the Father himself had resolv'd upon and determin'd as most requisite and suitable for his own exaltation.

And as he had the same regard, that the name of God should be reverenc'd, so he bears the same strong affection, and infinite love with the Father to all that are ordain'd to eternal life. And ever was as truly desirous as he, that a kingdom should be prepared for them; and that all these heirs of salvation should be purchas'd and redeem'd by his blood, pardon'd and forgiven thro' his righteousness, adopted and sanctified by his Spirit, that they should be supported by his

his power, and guided by his counsel, 'till they shall be put into the full possession of the glory design'd them; and was as much concern'd that all this should be done in the way that would most redound to the honour of the divine perfections, and the glory of each person in the Godhead, as the Father himself could be.

Now in this perfect and full agreement of Christ with his Father, there was a sure foundation for the Father's confidence in him. But then Christ's agreement in all these momentous and high concerns still respects his relation to his Father, as he was his eternal Son; in which relation is included the sameness of his nature with the Father: And this I humbly conceive is the only ground upon which we may affirm, that he is infinitely One in purpose and design, in consent and will, in divine affection and eternal love with his Father.

Thus the relation Christ stood in to the Father gave him a peculiar fitness for the work and office of a Mediator. Which farther appears,

3. *In the singular advantage which this relation gave for the highest display of the Divine Holiness in the sufferings of the Mediator.*

Holiness is a chief perfection of God. This is his greatest title of glory, and that wherein his Majesty is most illustrious. This therefore is that which he most delights to

honour. As the perfection itself is so necessary that all others would be none without it; so the display of this was so requisite that if all the perfections of God had been honour'd by the Mediator, and this neglected, no atonement had been made for sin, no peace obtain'd for sinners. This then we may well suppose had a special influence into the original design of Christ's Mediation.

Various are the methods in which God has given a manifestation of his Holiness, particularly in the creation of man, who was made *after his image*, not merely as he was a *rational*, but as he was an *holy* creature. The image of God did chiefly consist in holiness. Therefore the *New-man* is said *to be created after God in righteousness and true holiness.* The works of his providence are stamp'd with his holiness. All his acts of kindness, mercy, and love to his people are declarations of this, which is acknowledg'd in the song of *Mary*, *He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and* holy *is his name.* All dreadful executions of judgments spring from his holiness, and are plain demonstrations of his hatred of sin.

Eph. iv. 24.

Luke i. 40.

But among all his works none are so deeply impressed with his holiness as the work of redemption; a great part of the design whereof was, that sin might be put away by an atoning sacrifice, and the image of God re-

ſtor'd by new creating Grace. If we look into the way of our redemption by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, we ſee the holineſs of God ſhining therein, ſince his infinite purity can accept none upon the account of any righteouſneſs of their own, becauſe it is imperfect, polluted, and ſtain'd with ſin; or if we conſider the way of our acceſs into all the fruits of redemption, this is by *faith, which purifies the heart, and works by love.*

But there is not any thing relating to redemption itſelf, in which we have an higher diſplay of this perfection of God than what we have in the ſufferings of Chriſt the Mediator. This I apprehend is evident to all who have true faith to *look upon him whom they have pierc'd.*

Every thing that tended to aggravate his ſorrows was but a farther diſplay of God's holineſs. How bright and ſtrong do the rays of his purity appear when beheld as ſhining in Chriſt's ſufferings! Let us view him ſuffering under the meanneſs, poverty, and reproach of his life, under the exquiſite tortures of his lingring death, and under the more dreadful miſeries of his ſoul agonizing with the wrath of God, due for ſin; and how grievous muſt his ſorrows then appear!

Let us view him farther, as a perſon in himſelf innocent and holy, as one that *knew no ſin* of his own, but ever did the

things which were pleasing to his God, as one that could stand under the imputation of sin, thro' a voluntary susception only, taking our sins upon him, that he might make atonement for them; and we may then see somewhat of the brightness of God's purity, which made all this necessary before any salvation for sinners could be obtain'd: When we add to this the farther consideration of the dignity of his person, as he is over all, God blessed for ever, and then behold him as made a curse, and notwithstanding his glory, bleeding to death, it still gives us a brighter manifestation of that glorious attribute.

But let us consider him in his peculiar relation of a Son, as the only begotten and well-beloved of his Father, yet not *spar'd* but punish'd to the utmost, and that by the immediate hand of his own eternal Father; and our admiring apprenhensions of the infinite holiness of this Majesty must be heightned, while with all the other circumstances we call to mind the delight, the pleasure and satisfaction which the Father took in *bruising* his eternal Son: And this notwithstanding the wonderful interchanges of infinite love, which agreeable to the relation, ever pass'd between them. We have then the highest and fullest display of the unspotted Holiness of the Divine Nature, and God's infinite hatred of sin that can be conceiv'd.

Isa. liii. 10.

All

All the demonſtrations of his immaculate purity, in the judgments brought upon a wicked world, all the diſplays of it, in the dreadful torments of the damn'd in hell, and in the irreverſible ſentence paſs'd upon the fallen angels. Theſe and all ſuch tremendous inſtances of God's hatred of ſin, are as nothing in compariſon of the diſplay thereof, which is given in the ſufferings and death of Chriſt. But as among all the circumſtances whether of miſery or glory, that attended him under his ſufferings, nothing made his ſorrows ſo wonderful or aſtoniſhing, ſo nothing could give them ſuch a peculiar fitneſs to anſwer the end of his death, as the nearneſs of his relation to his Father.

This was it which rais'd his ſufferings into ſuch ſignificancy as to render them the ſtrongeſt proof that could be given of God's deteſtation of ſin. This was it which put ſuch weight into them, and made them ſo important, that thro' theſe, tho' continu'd for ſo ſhort a time, the holineſs of God was fully vindicated and exalted infinitely above all the contradiction of ſin, and blaſphemies of ſinners.

This is the argument which above all others may convince men and angels, that God is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, Heb. i. 13. ſince he *ſpar'd not his own Son*, who out of an infinite zeal for his Father's glory, and a compaſſionate regard to his people's wel-

fare, bore it by imputation only, without any guiltineſs or defilement in himſelf.

This relation then muſt be allow'd to give Chriſt a peculiar fitneſs for his mediatorial work, as it was attended with a ſingular advantage to anſwer one great end of his office, the higheſt exaltation of the holineſs of God.

We have ſeen how his *fitneſs* to be Mediator, did ſpring from his peculiar relation to God. I am farther to ſhew, that

Chriſt's fitneſs for his work did ariſe from his peculiar relation to his people.

To clear this, it may not be amiſs to trace this relation to its original. We may therefore briefly obſerve, that the infinitely great and bleſſed *Jehovah* did from all eternity purpoſe, that his perſonal ſubſiſtences, and all his divine perfections, ſhould be glorified in his raiſing up a people to be his own peculiar treaſure, who ſhould be favour'd with the brighteſt manifeſtations of his higheſt glory, and the fulleſt communications of his richeſt love, in the immediate viſions and enjoyments of the heavenly ſtate. And that this decree might be eſtabliſh'd upon a ſure foundation, the whole deſign was ſettled in a way of compact, or covenant agreement between the Father and his eternal Son. Chriſt was ordain'd to be the grand repoſitory of the church's bleſſings. *It pleaſed the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* With reference hereunto we

Col. i. 19.

may

may understand those words of Christ, *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.* He was appointed to be the great medium of all divine communications. He was *to give his people the glory that was given him,* and *of his fulness* were they *to receive* even *grace for grace.* Prov. viii. 22. John xvii. 22. and i. 16.

And by a special and sovereign act of the Father, the persons likewise that were *ordain'd to eternal life* were given unto Christ, who accepted them at his Father's hand, undertaking to bring them into the full possession of all the glory to which they were appointed. He also promised that this should be accomplish'd exactly agreeable to the Father's purpose, in a way perfectly consistent with the honour of the divine attributes, and such as would tend to their highest exaltation, and engaging at the same time, that this should be effected, notwithstanding the difficulties which he knew would arise to obstruct and oppose it.

Now, in these eternal transactions which passed between the Father and the Son, there was originally founded a near relation between Christ and his people; upon the account whereof they are term'd his brethren, he and they being all included in the same purpose, all comprehended in the same decree of election, and all interested in the same unchangeable love. *For the Father has loved them as he loved Christ himself.* John xvii. 23.

All were beloved and chosen together, tho' *each in his own order*; for it was proper and necessary that Christ should be *the first born among many brethren.* And it was enough for his people, that they should be the children of God in him. He was to be the great pattern and exemplar of their glory, and they were *predestinated to be conformed to his image*; thro' the participation whereof they actually stand forth in time, and appear to be of the family of heaven.

Rom viii. 29.

And as a farther discovery of the nearness of this relation, 'tis sometimes represented in scripture by the similitude of the union which there is between the natural head and the members of its body. Thus Christ is expresly term'd *the Head of the body the church*, and his people are declared to be *members of his body.* His special relation to the church, which is signified hereby, is very different from all the relations which he bears to the rest of the world. He is said indeed to be *head over all things to the church.* Which title there denotes only his sovereignty or lordship, his dominion or rule, in the exercise whereof he imploys, as he pleases, the whole creation in a subserviency to his people's welfare, and his own glory. But his headship, with respect to his people, carries in it the strictest union, the strongest sympathy, with the most tender watchfulness, and the greatest care.

Col. i. 18. Eph. v. 30. Eph. i. 22.

This relation being thus founded, made it exceeding proper for him to be the Mediator. As it laid him under an engagement to undertake it; ſo it furniſh'd him with a ſingular fitneſs to perform it. When man was fallen by his iniquity, to whom ſhould the Father look for the deliverance of his choſen, but to him that had received them as his charge, and engaged for the ſecurity of the divine honour in their everlaſting bleſſedneſs? Who ſo fit to recover their forfeited glory, as he that was their elder brother, and had the right of redemption in himſelf? or who ſo aptly conſtituted, as he that was their federal head, and thus was deemed as one with them?

Now that this union or relation between Chriſt and his people did fit him to be their Mediator, will be evident from two remarks.

1. It was a juſt ground for the imputation of their ſins unto him.

2. It was a juſt ground for the imputation of his righteouſneſs unto them.

It was neceſſary, in order to Chriſt's enduring the penalties of the law, that the iniquity of the church ſhould be laid upon him; but conſidering his innocence, and ſpotleſs purity, this had been utterly repugnant to the juſtice of God, had it not been for this relation.

That Chriſt did bear the puniſhment due to his people, we have ſhewn before, and it

it may be farther confirmed by such places
1 Pet. iii. 18. of scripture as these; *For Christ also suffer'd for sins, the just for the unjust*, that he might bring us to God. Again, *He that knew no*
2 Cor. v. 21. *sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Now, by the nearness of Christ's relation to his people, an early provision was made for an intire vindication of this proceeding. For tho' it would be an unrighteous thing in God, absolutely speaking, to make the just suffer for the unjust; yet thro' this wise constitution, all occasion for such a reproach was wholly precluded, since according to the settlement of the everlasting covenant, and Christ's voluntary agreement therein, he was one with them, as the principal and his surety are one in the judgment of the law. And their iniquity being laid upon him in a legal manner, it was consistent with the honour of Divine Justice, that the punishment which was to be inflicted for sin should likewise fall upon him. So that when this union is consider'd, the construction that must be put upon Christ's suffering for his people amounts only to this, that the head was wounded for the healing of his members.

There is no room then for any reflection upon the Father's justice, all was prevented by this relation; yea, the treatment which without this would have been slur'd, now appears with the greatest advantage: God's

justice

juſtice to his Son being fully vindicated, while thro' the ſharpeſt ſufferings of an innocent Saviour, his grace to us is richly magnified. And thus there was the greateſt expedience, without the leaſt injuſtice in this awful diſpenſation, which iſſued in the higheſt advancement of the Mediator's honour, his people's ſalvation, and his Father's Glory.

2. *In this a foundation was laid for the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs unto them.*

To condemn the innocent, and ſave the guilty, are evils equally hateful. The righteous Lord cannot abſolutely juſtify the wicked, any more than puniſh the righteous; and yet, if there was no way in which the ungodly could be juſtified, the whole race of mankind muſt periſh: but when the Mediator was made ſin for his people, the deſign of it was, that they might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him. When *he finiſhed tranſgreſſions, and made an end of ſin, he alſo brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs.* And 'tis the bleſſedneſs of his people to have a righteouſneſs imputed unto them, which does not reſult from any works of their own, but from the obedience and ſufferings of their Saviour alone.

Now, the ſame conſideration which made it equitable that their iniquity ſhould be laid on him, makes it juſt and reaſonable that his righteouſneſs ſhould be imputed unto them; and this, as has been declared,

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was his federal relation. By this the perfections of God were cleared, when the juſt ſuffer'd for the unjuſt, and by this his honour is ſecured, when through the righteouſneſs of the Mediator he juſtifies the ungodly. As the ſame legal union which brings the debt upon the ſurety, gives the debtor all the benefit of the ſurety's payment; ſo the ſame covenant relation which brought Chriſt under the charge of the ſins of his people, ſecures to them the imputation of his righteouſneſs.

Thus we ſee, that in this relation of Chriſt to his people, a foundation was laid for the imputation of his righteouſneſs unto them. And indeed, the bleſſings which they receive in time, and to eternity, are all given upon the account of this relation: from this flows the gift of the Spirit, who is ſent unto all that are included in the everlaſting covenant, to apprehend and quicken them, to change their nature, and frame their heart for God, to give them faith, and enable them to lay hold of Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, to accept of his mediation, and improve it with thankfulneſs and joy.

And when thro' the mighty operations of the Holy Ghoſt any are renewed, they have then a ſure ground upon which to conclude that Chriſt is theirs, and they are his; ſuch may reſt aſſur'd that their iniquity was laid on Chriſt, and that his righteouſneſs is im-

imputed unto them. This Mediator having made peace by the blood of his Croſs, they may with humble boldneſs draw near to God in their own perſons, expecting a delightful fellowſhip and communion with him; for all impediments are now removed, and a way is opened for a friendly intercourſe between God and them. And all this liberty of acceſs to God, may be conſider'd not only as the effect of Chriſt's oblation, but as the fruit and conſequence of that covenant relation, which was originally founded in thoſe eternal tranſactions wherein the Father gave, and the Son receiv'd them to be his brethren, and the members of his myſtical body.

From ſuch conſiderations as theſe it appears, that there was an admirable ſuitableneſs in Chriſt's relation to his people, fitting him to ſuſtain the character, and diſcharge the office which the text aſcribes to him as the one Mediator between God and man.

INFERENCES.

1. *Hence we may infer, that this Mediator was ſucceſsful in his undertaking.*

When we reflect upon the wonderful conſtitution of his perſon, we behold his capacity and ability to go through every part of his work, whether we reſpect the abaſement or glory required therein. And when we farther contemplate the nearneſs of his

his relation to God and his people, we may be confident of his diligence and application. His zeal for his Father's Glory, and his compassionate regard to his people's happiness, would suffer him to neglect nothing which was necessary to be done, that the work might be accomplish'd.

And when we view him as imploying the utmost of his sufficience in the work, we have a firm ground for our assurance that enough was done to magnify the law, to satisfy Divine Justice, and obtain a perfect reconciliation. Finally, when we consider the dignity of his person, and the original constitution upon which his relation to his church was founded, we may conclude, without fear or doubting, that in all his service he was accepted; for in the same compact in which it was agreed that the Son should *make his soul an offering for sin*, it was granted and determin'd that he *should see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied.*

Isa. liii. 10.

Here then is the greatest encouragement to faith, and a sure relief for distressed souls; for an atonement is made, and *now grace shall reign thro' righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Rom. v. 21.

2. *Hence we may infer, that Christ is the only Mediator between God and man.*

None but one of like glorious qualifications with him was fit for the office. And among all the inhabitants of heaven and earth,

earth, ſuch another could not be found: He was *the only begotten of the Father*, the ſole Head of the Church, and the only Perſon that had communion in the two natures, between which a reconciliation was intended: He then muſt be the only Perſon that was fit to ſtand between God and ſinners. It is happy for his people therefore, that his ſufficience for his work made it needleſs, ſince the nature of the work render'd it impoſſible for any other to be join'd with him; none but he could have an oblation to preſent that could be ſatisfactory, and without this no interceſſion that any could make would be ſucceſsful.

Let this then engage us to make uſe of his mediation, and depend upon that alone for our acceptance and peace with God. What have we to do with any other mediators, whether for interceſſion, any more than for redemption. Theſe different parts of the Mediator's work cannot be ſeparated.

Let us then abhor the deluſions and blaſphemies of popery: While according to the principles and practice thereof other mediators are ſought to be imploy'd in this work, the vileſt aſperſions are caſt upon Chriſt. For this cannot be otherwiſe interpreted than as including a denial of his fitneſs, an impeachment of his faithfulneſs, or a diffidence of his ſucceſs; but a ſuppoſition of any thing of this kind muſt carry in it the greateſt reproach, and high-

eſt

eſt diſhonour, not only to the Mediator himſelf, but to him who call'd him to his office.

If he was not fit, why then was he employ'd at firſt? If not faithful, wherefore is he ſtill continu'd? If both, for what reaſon ſhould the ſucceſs of his undertaking be call'd in queſtion? And if he did ſucceed, what occaſion for another to be engag'd beſides? To join the moſt perfect ſaint, or glorious angel in his work of interceſſion, is in effect to degrade him from the glory of his office, to deny the dignity of his perſon; and to prefer and exalt the diſciple above his Lord, and the ſervant above his Maſter. It ſuppoſes that the creature's intereſt with God is thought to be greater than the intereſt of his own eternal Son.

Or if it be pretended that the interceſſion of others is made uſe of to obtain favour with Chriſt, this is to rob him of his humanity, to ſtrip him of his ſympathy and affection; 'tis to imagine that he is not ſufficiently touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but wants a *compaſſion to thoſe that are ignorant and out of the way.* Such as theſe are the odious conſequences with which the doctrine and practice of the *Papiſts* muſt be loaded. Let the conſideration hereof raiſe our abhorrence of their errors, and eſtabliſh our regard to Chriſt's mediation, and our dependence upon that alone.

3. *Hence*

3. *Hence we may infer that the kindneſs and wiſdom of God is greatly to be admir'd, in his ordaining and calling Chriſt to this office.*

The firſt propoſal was from him. This ſeems to be implied in that paſſage, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! for the words may be taken as containing an anſwer to ſome propoſal made. But the Father more expreſsly aſſum'd this to himſelf when he ſpake in viſion to the Holy One, and ſaid, *I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one choſen out of the people: I have found David my ſervant, with my holy oil have I anointed him.* Pſal. lxxxix. 19, 20.

The tender regard to our ſalvation which appears in the original conſtitution and appointment of the office itſelf, beſpeaks his kindneſs; and the fitneſs of the means which he herein pitch'd upon for its certain accompliſhment, is a bright diſplay of his wiſdom. And ſince *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf*, it becomes us to join in that doxology of the apoſtle, and ſay, *Bleſſed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.* 2 Cor. v. 19. Eph. i. 3.

By him was Chriſt ſet up *from everlaſting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was*; by him were all the terms propos'd, and the various articles adjuſted, which reſpect either his own glory, the Mediator's honour, or his people's happineſs. He ordain-

ed the perſons who were to be partakers of the benefit of this mediation, as he allotted all the degrees both of Grace and Glory, which every member of Chriſt's myſtical body ſhould receive. Then let him have our humble adorations, ſince he ſpar'd not his own Son, but engag'd him in this work, with ſpecial views to the preſent peace and comfort, and the final happineſs and ſalvation of our immortal ſouls.

4. *We may here ſee the greatneſs of the condeſcention and love of Chriſt the Mediator.*

His acceptance ſhould be equally admir'd with the Father's propoſal. He readily undertook the work, tho' he was well appriz'd of all the abaſement and ſorrow to himſelf that muſt enſue.

The difference between God and ſinners was not to be compoſed upon any terms without his precious blood. His own death muſt be the atonement: A death, the miſeries whereof cannot be expreſs'd or utter'd. The torments included in it can't be fully apprehended by us; torments beyond all kinds of death. The moſt cruciating pains of his body were the leaſt part of his ſufferings. The agony of his ſoul was inconceivably greater. This he expected when he firſt engag'd to be the Mediator, yet he readily agreed. This he met with in the accompliſhment of his work, yet he never ſought to be releas'd, but chearfully went thro' all with a moſt perfect ſubmiſſion,

ſaying

ſaying to his Father, with reſpect to his ſoreſt troubles, *Not my will but thine be done.*

He interpos'd on our behalf when none elſe could. He enter'd into the preſence of God, and drew near, even to his throne, as the Mediator and Surety of his people: He did this when the fierce anger and fiery indignation of the Lord was burning againſt ſin and ſinners. Such was the greatneſs of this attempt, and the difficulty which attended, that the Father himſelf is repreſented as aſtoniſh'd, that even his own Son ſhould make the venture, which ſeems to be the import of that queſtion, *For who is this that engag'd his heart to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord?* Jer. xxx. 21.

And did we more fully apprehend the evil of ſin, and the dreadfulneſs of the wrath to which it expoſes; did we conſider more the inflexible juſtice of God's nature, and the ſtrength of his arm; did we know more of the power of his anger, and his hatred of ſin, we ſhould then have more admiring thoughts of Chriſt's condeſcention and love, and ſhould be more effectually prevail'd upon to ſeek his glory, and ſtudy a more ſuitable return for all the compaſſion and kindneſs which he has ſhewn.

5. *We may hence ſee that under the ſoreſt diſtreſs for ſin, that any upon earth can fall into, there is ſtill room for hope.*

Let the worſt be ſuppos'd that can be conceiv'd of a ſinner's caſe, there is enough in Chriſt's mediation to prevent deſpair. To him therefore let us have recourſe under every load of guilt, under all our fears and diſcouragements. Let us by faith truly rely upon him, as the great and only Mediator between God and ſinners, and we ſhall find complete ſalvation.

F I N I S.

CHRIST, the Christian's Propitiation and Advocate:

Consider'd in two

SERMONS

On 1 JOHN ii. 2, 3.

BY

PHILIP GIBBS.

CHRIST THE CHRISTIAN'S PROPITIATION AND ADVOCATE.

1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.

---And if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our ſins.

IN the words immediately preceding, the Apoſtle acquaints us with one ſpecial view that he had in writing his epiſtle, namely to diſſuade and deter Chriſtians from ſin, and to make them more careful to abſtain from the commiſſion of it. *Theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not.*

But whereas no Christian does, or can, with all his circumspection and watchfulness, and with the utmost of his caution us'd against sin, live wholly free from it: whereas the *best* are subject to deviate from the prescribed path, and too often, alas! do so, whilst they remain in the present state; the apostle leads our thoughts to that which is proper to relieve and support in consideration hereof. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate*, &c.

The supposition he here makes, is by no means to be construed as design'd to extend unto *habitual presumptuous* sinning, what the apostle calls *doing sin*, i. e. *persisting* in a vicious course, or *allowing* ones self in any immoral practice. *This* will never agree to *such* as he is speaking of: for they are persons who, it is plain, are allow'd to have a title both to the atonement and advocacy of Christ, notwithstanding they sin. And it is taken for granted, that they were such as he *himself* was, consider'd in his *private* capacity: accordingly, in the declaration which he makes for their comfort, he joins himself with them. Further it is presum'd, that they were such as conscientiously comply'd with the exhortation laid down in the former part of the verse, and sincerely endeavour'd to avoid all sin. Of none but such would the apostle affirm (putting himself at the same time into the number) we have an Advocate with the Father, &c. When there

1 John iii. 3, 10.

therefore he ſays, *If any man ſin*, he is far from having reſpect unto our being guilty of *deliberate* and *habitual* vice. Nor does his ſuppoſition ſo *directly* and *properly* reſpect committing ſin, tho' it ben't frequently and cuſtomarily, in the *groſſer* acts and inſtances thereof: tho' as this is poſſible even to true believers, I would be loth to aſſert, that there can be no manner of reference to it. But what the ſuppoſition moſt properly relates to, is, being guilty of ſin thro' frailty, incogitancy, and inadvertence, offending thro' the weakneſs of nature, and the ſurprize and prevalence of temptation. Amongſt the many good interpreters who underſtand it in this ſenſe, I find the renowned *Calvin* *, who is for having the *conditional* particle to be reſolv'd into a *cauſal*, and takes the *indefinite* term to be equivalent to an *univerſal*. *If any man ſinneth*; *i. e. becauſe every man* ſinneth; or ſeeing it cannot be but that we ſhould *thus* ſin. We all do ſo daily: and bleſſed be God, this need not produce deſpondency, nor dejection of ſpirit in us. We are directed to Jeſus Chriſt as one in whoſe mediation, atonement and advocacy all needful relief lies. *If any man ſin, we have an Advocate*, &c.

Here then are two glorious delightful *characters* under which Chriſt is repreſented to us. I ſhall ſpend a diſcourſe upon *each*; and as I choſe to follow the order of

* Vid. *Calv.* in loc.

time

time shall begin with the latter. Christ's being our *Propitiation.* In treating on which I would,

I. Endeavour to settle the true *sense* and *import* of the character.

II. Show how *fitly it agrees* to our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. I would *settle* the *true sense* and *import* of the character. Some understand it as relating to the *mortification* and *destruction* of sin in us, or our Saviour's delivering us from the *power* and *dominion* of sin, by affording us supplies of grace and strength for that purpose *. And it is readily allow'd to be true in fact that he doth this; and we shall have eternal reason to bless his name for it. But I can't agree that this is intended to be signify'd to us by the *character* in the text: for it relates *purely* to Christ's finishing sin, and freeing us from it as to its *guilt*, by being a sacrifice for it. The original word †, which is well enough translated *propitiation*, is constantly us'd by the Greek writers in the sense of *atoning* for crimes, *appeasing* him that has been offended by them, *turning* away his displeasure and wrath, and *inducing* him to forgive. Some such *act itself*, or *that whereby* it is *perform'd*, is the genuine and only signification of the word, if we may credit a competent Judge ‡. And it seems

* Vid. Pol. Synopf. † ἱλασμός. ‡ Grotius de satisfactione, 139, 140. ἱλάσκειν apud Græcos scriptores omnes, Poetas,

ſeems to me to point directly to the ſacrifices us'd in *expiations* †, eſpecially thoſe which were of divine appointment amongſt the *Jews*. Accordingly we meet with it once and again in the verſion of the Seventy, where ſacrifices of that nature are mention'd, *Lev.* vi. 6, 7. *Numb.* v. 8. *Ezek.* xliv. 27. The rams or other beaſts ſlain in ſacrifice for ſins and treſpaſſes, that theſe might be forgiven, are here ſaid to be rams and ſacrifices of *atonement*.

Surely we have reaſon then to conclude, that when the apoſtle calls Chriſt our propitiation, he does not ſo far depart from the obvious and uſual meaning of the term, as ſome imagine: but that he takes it in the ſenſe of all other authors, particularly the *Jewiſh*: and the idea which he would hereby convey to us, is, that of a *piacular* or *expiatory ſacrifice*; one who atones for the guilt of our ſins, and renders the Divine Majeſty propitious and favourable in the forgiveneſs of them.

'Tis objected, I know, by a certain writer *, that the apoſtle ſpeaks of Chriſt here as our Advocate in *heaven*, where he doth not offer himſelf, where he doth not ſatisfy God, nor ſuffer any puniſhment on our account. But this objection I take to be of

Poetas, Hiſtoricos, alios eſt placare. Tum actus ipſe, tum id quo propriè actus peragitur, *Græcis* ἱλασμὸς, Latinis, Placamen dicitur.

† Stiled therefore ἱλαρὰ & ἱλαστικά. * *Crellius.*

little

little force: for tho' the apostle does indeed speak of Christ as being in heaven, and performing the part of an advocate there, he pertinently mentions his propitiatory death and sacrifice, as that in the *vertue* whereof he pleads, or as being the *basis* and *foundation* of his advocacy. And thus there will be a clear *parallel* preserv'd between the sacerdotal actings of Jesus Christ, and those of the high-priest of old, particularly on the great day of atonement. The high-priest having slain the beasts appointed to be expiatoty sacrifices, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, was afterwards to take the blood, and carry it within the Holy of Holies, and there sprinkle it before the Mercy-seat, and so compleat the atonement he was to make for the sins of the people. Answerably, Christ our High Priest having offer'd a sacrifice of expiation here on earth, goes into heaven, there in effect to sprinkle the blood, to exhibit what he had offer'd, and to intercede with God on the foot hereof, in behalf of his people, that so reconciliation between God and them may be maintain'd. The entrance of the high-priest into the *holy place made with hands*, and his officiating there for the purposes of reconciliation, *presuppos'd* the offering of the some piacular victim or victims. 'Tis expresly observ'd by the apostle therefore, that he enter'd *not without blood* which he had offer'd.

Levit. xvi.

Heb. ix. 7.

And

And thus our Saviour's entrance into the true holy place, into heaven itself, and his transactions with God there for the same purposes, *presuppose* his making an oblation on earth, or offering a *real*, proper, propitiatory sacrifice for sins; in the virtue whereof it is that he now intercedes above in heaven. Which leads me on to prove that he did offer *such* sacrifice: or, as was proposed in the second place

II. To shew that the character of a Propitiation, as it has been explain'd, fitly belongs to * him. And I think I shall have establish'd this beyond any reasonable contradiction, when I have consider'd what are the essential *ingredients* or *requisites* of *expiatory* and *propitiatory* sacrifices *as such*, and afterwards shall have shewn, that *these ingredients and requisites* do all *concur*, and are to be found in a sacrifice of Christ, even what the gospel teaches us to believe he offer'd at his death.

1. Let us consider what is *requisite* and *necessary* unto a true *propitiatory* sacrifice, and that as distinguish'd from the other sorts.

There were various sorts of sacrifices enjoin'd unto the *Jews*, and mention'd in the old testament. The distribution of them, by the authors of the Jewish antiquities, is made

* Vid Outram. de sacrif. 81. Relandi antiquitates Hebræor. 24.

either

either according to the *matter* of them, or the *manner* in which they were offer'd; the *persons* for whom, the *place* where, *times* when, the *end* for which. And in regard to the *last*, they are commonly reduc'd to two heads, *eucharistical* and *expiatory*. The former offer'd in testimony of *gratitude*, for kindnesses bestow'd, as thankful acknowledgments for deliverances and mercies obtain'd: The other offer'd to *expiate* guilt, to appease the offended justice of God, and procure pardon and reconciliation. Now some things were *common* to *all sorts* and kinds of sacrifices: As that they must be *offer'd to God*, and have his allowance and approbation; must be *pure and perfect* in their kind; must be presented by the *Priest* and the like. Other things were peculiar to *one sort* of sacrifices, whereby they were *distinguish'd* from the rest. I reckon the following things to have been distinguishing in the sacrifices of expiation or atonement, or necessary to constitute them such.

Psal. cvii. 22.

Levit. i. 4.

1.) A *substitution* of them in the room and places of the offenders that offer'd them: they were appointed and interpreted to be in *lieu* of these. Accordingly the Lord is said to have given the Children of *Israel* the blood of the beasts slain in sacrifice upon the altar; which is as much as to say, I admit of their death in your stead, and accept of their lives by way of *commu-*

Levit. xvii. 11.

tation or *exchange* for what you have forfeited. For the clearing up of this we must note, that the *Israelites* were under a *Theocracy*. God was their King and Lawgiver, who gave them two sorts of laws, one *ceremonial* and *ritual*, the other *civil* and *judicial*. And as it is the nature of all laws to be attended with sanctions to enforce the observance of them, *these* laws did not want for *theirs*. The former were enforc'd with the penalty of *legal uncleanness* (upon the account of which a person was debar'd from the tabernacle, and separated from the congregation.) The latter were enforc'd with the penalty of *corporal death*. But the Lord was pleas'd to dispense with his own laws, and relax the penalties thus far, that the offering of certain sacrifices, which he prescrib'd, should suffice for them who disobey'd and transgress'd; their obligation to endure the penalty should be hereby dissolv'd, their uncleanness purg'd, and their forfeited lives restor'd. Thus sacrifices were incorporated into the polity of the *Jews*, as well as made a part of their worship. And it is very evident, that there was a *substitution* of all those which were designed as *expiations*, in the room of the transgressors. So the *Jewish* writers apprehend, who tell us that God in mercy accepted of a sacrifice, as a thing *substituted* in the guilty person's room †. And whereas any person when he brought the sa-

† *Outram* 274.

crifice

fice was wont to say, *Let this be my expiation*, 'tis all one they tell us, as if it had been said, *Let this be in my stead*; and its life go for mine[a]. The substitution was partly design'd to be signify'd by the rite of *laying on of hands*, as may be gather'd from the precept for using this rite. *He* Levit. i. 4. *shall put his hand upon the head of the offering, and it shall be accepted for him.* And it was plainly express'd in the *form of prayer* which the learn'd Dr. *Outram* quotes, as what accompanied the killing of the sacrifice[b]. The *Jews* then took it to be slain in the offender's room and stead. And the like apprehensions had *all nations* of expiatory sacrifices, (however they came by 'em) as the same learned man has abundantly prov'd[c]; and likewise *Grotius* in his valuable treatise of the satisfaction of Christ[d]. Hence,

2. Another requisite of propitiatory sacrifices is *bearing* of the offender's *guilt and punishment.*

As a natural consequence of the substitution, there was a kind of *transferring* of *sin* from the people to these sacrifices, which was suppos'd to be done by the *imposition of hands* on their head before they were kill'd. For the meaning of this rite seems to have been not only solemnly, and intirely to devote the sacrifice to the use for which it was design'd, and to

[a] 273, *Buxtorf.* Lex. in voc. Kaphar, 1078. [b] *Outr.* 273. [c] 283. [d] 198.

2 shew

shew that it was substituted in the offerer's room, but to denote the *removing* of sin, in a manner, and translating of punishment from himself unto *it*. Accordingly the laying on of hands was always accompanied with prayer and *confession* [e], insomuch that the *Jews* lay it down as a rule, that where there is no confession of sins there is no imposition of hands; for imposition of hands, say they, belongs to confession. Hereby then sins were supposed to be taken off from the sinner and put upon the head of the sacrifice; as particularly on the anniversary of expiation, when *Aaron* was requir'd to *lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat*, and *confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat*; namely, by laying his hands on the head, and confessing their sins over him, with prayer to God to remit them. *Thus* were they all charg'd upon the goat, says a celebrated commentator on the place [f]; and the punishment of them was transfer'd from the *Israelites* unto it, laid upon its head. And it appears, says he, by the form of all other *sin-offerings*, which were occasionally offer'd, that he who brought them put off the guilt which he had contracted from himself, and laid it on the sacrifice, which was to die for him, which he did by laying his hands on the head of it at the door of the tabernacle,

Levit. xvi. 21.

[e] *Outram*, 166. [f] Dr. *Patrick*.

while it was yet alive. Then with his hand so placed, he made a confession of his sins, for which he desir'd forgiveness, by the offering of the sacrifice: That is, he pray'd by those rites, that the beast being offer'd and slain, he might be spared from punishment. Which was a plain transferring the guilt from himself unto his sacrifice, which being yet alive, and thus laden with his guilt, was then brought to the altar, and there slain for the guilty person: That is, suffer'd and died in his stead; for there was no other reason of its being put to death there, and in that manner.

This notion of the death of expiatory sacrifice being a *vicarious* punishment, was not only found amongst the *Jews*, but the same was entertain'd by the *Gentile* part of the world, as might be shewn if there was occasion. Whence,

3. As a further property belonging to these sacrifices, they served to *appease*, or *pacify*, and turn away anger; to free from guilt, and procure reconciliation. This is held forth in their very name; and it appears to me to be a plain and necessary consequence of the two former. If they were appointed in *lieu* of the offenders, and bore their *guilt*, had the *punishment* due to their sins transferr'd upon them, they must make atonement, divert anger, obtain remission, and reconciliation. And *such effects* are ascribed to them *frequently* in the Old Testament,

Levit. v. 6, &c.

Ver. 7.

whether they were for single persons, or for the whole *community* and *body* of the people. Concerning the sin and trespass-offerings, appointed to be offered by *private* persons in various cases, we are told, that however they might differ in other points, yet herein both agreed, as expiation was a fruit of both. And this is said to be the effect of sacrifice offer'd for the whole congregation, in case of their sinning ignorantly. 'Tis also spoken of as the fruit and effect of the sacrifices offer'd once a year, for all the sins of *Israel*, on a day which took its name from hence, being call'd the day of expiation, or atonement. A real and proper atonement was made by all the sin-offerings under the law, for the *Israelites* in the sight of God, consider'd as their *King*. *Civil* and *ceremonial* guilt was hereby put away, and impunity obtain'd for them. This is denoted sometimes by a being *cleans'd* from all sins, and by *being purged*, *purify'd*, and *sanctified*.

Chap. vii. 7. Num. xv. 26. Levit. xvi. 30. 1 Sam. iii. 14.

We have now done enquiring after the necessary *ingredients* into a proper propitiatory sacrifice, and have found them to be substitution in the room of offenders, bearing their guilt and punishment, and so making atonement for them, concerning the sins they committed, and procuring the exercise of pardoning grace and mercy towards them.

Numb. xix. 19. Levit. viii. 15.

I shall now shew that *all* these things do *concur* in a sacrifice of our blessed Saviour, which he offer'd when he died on the cross.

As some general proof of this, I think it not amiss to suggest, that the sacrifices under the law, especially the principal, or the propitiatory ones, were but *types* and *figures* of what our Saviour hath offer'd. The main end of their institution was to shadow out a sacrifice of his, as the apostle plainly teaches us when he says, that the first tabernacle was a *figure* for the time while it stood, in which were offer'd *gifts and sacrifices*, that *could* Heb. ix. 9. *not make any perfect.* So when he affirms that the law had a *shadow of good things to come*, but not the *very image of the things*, and *therefore could never with the sacrifices which they offer'd year by year continually make the* Chap. x. 1. *comers thereunto perfect.* Accordingly, we find references and allusions to the chief of the legal sacrifices where Christ and his oblation are spoken of; as to the *daily-sacri-* John i. 29. *fice* in his being stil'd a Lamb; to the *pas-* 1 Cor. v. 7. *sover*, in his being *thus* nam'd; to the annual sacrifice, on the day of atonement, in his being said to be the propitiation for the sins of the world; to the *burnt-offerings* and *sin-offerings*, which are mention'd as about to be laid aside upon his coming, and offering the body prepar'd for him. Now without doubt the *substance* is superior to the *shadow*, and the *antitype* to the *type.* If the one then has any thing *propitiatory* essential-

Words of the text. Heb. x. 7.

ly

ly belonging to it, the other must have as *much* and *more*.

But to descend to particulars, and let you see that the death of Christ has in it all the 'forenamed requisites of a sacrifice truly expiatory: As,

1. He died as one that was *substituted* in our stead, and whose life was parted with in *exchange* for the forfeited lives of our souls. This is prov'd from many passages of sacred writ; as from all those which speak of his *giving himself*, and *suffering and dying for our sins*; (for here the preposition signifies that our sins were the impulsive and procuring cause of his death, which could only be in as much as he was put in the room and place of us transgressors g). So likewise from those which speak of his body being broken *for* us, and his blood shed: Wherein it is asserted that he gave his life, or laid it down *for* the sheep, laid it down *for his* friends, that he died *for all*, and suffer'd *for us* in the flesh, where the preposition in the original is generally believed to import a substitution. As 'tis most manifest it does in other places where he is said to have suffer'd the *just for the unjust*, and in due time to have died *for the ungodly*; *i. e.* to have suffer'd as our sponsor, and as being put in our place. So the following words explain it. *Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would e-*

1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. i. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 21. *and* iv. 1.

1 Cor. ii. 24. Mat. xxvi. 28. John x. 11, 15. *Chap.* xv. 13, 14. 2 Cor. v. 14. 1 Pet. iv. 1. *Chap.* iii. 18.

Rom. v. 6. *Ver.* 7, 8.

g Vid. *Outram.* 345.

even dare to die. But God commendeth his *love towards us, in that whilst we are yet sinners, Christ died for us.* How plain does the apostle here speak of Christ's suffering death for us in the same sense that one man is said to die for another? even according to the meaning of *David,* in that passionate wish for his son *Absalom,* when news was brought him of his death; *would to God I had dy'd for thee, O Absalom, my son:* O that my life had been instead of thine. But the substitution of Christ in our room when he dy'd, is prov'd more strongly yet from two other passages in the New Testament, where he is said to have given *himself a ransom for all*; or *his life a ransom for many.* Where the original word translated *ransom,* not only answers to the *Hebrew,* by which the *Jews* were wont to express a propitiatory sacrifice, but the *preposition* is different from what we have in the other places [h]; and is *ever* used to denote substitution and commutation. Thus it is used when applied to *things,* and we read of rendring evil *for* evil, an eye for an eye, a tooth *for* a tooth; and thus it is us'd when applied to *persons*; as when Christ bids *Peter* pay a piece of money *for them* two; and when *Archelaus* is said to have reign'd

2 Sam. xviii. 33.

1 Tim. ii. 6. Mat. xx. 28.

[h] Ἀντί, 12. Omnino vox ἀντὶ juncta personæ, & verbo δοῦναι, requirit ut persona in genitivo indicata, idem in genere aut specie datura fuerit, quod nunc alius dedit. *Grot.* de Satisf. 177. See also Dr. *Owen* of the Satisfaction of Christ.

in

in *Judea in the room* of his father *Herod.* From all these places then we may justly and solidly infer the substitution of our Lord Jesus in our room, and that he died as having undertaken for us, and in some sense sustaining our persons [i]. Mat. xvii. 27. ii. 22.

2. He was charged with our sin, and bore our *guilt*; I don't mean the *culpable*, but the *penal* guilt. Being constituted a surety for us, by God the Father's appointment, and his own free consent; he came under the imputation of our sins, and an obligation to suffer for us. The punishment due to *us* the sinners and transgressors, was *transferr'd* to, and *inflicted* on him; and he sustain'd, as near as the nature of the case would admit, the very same pains and miseries which we had incurr'd. There are clear and numerous testimonies in holy writ to the truth of this also. He is not only said to have been *deliver'd*, and to have *given* himself, *for our offences*, (as in the places quoted before) but to have *borne our sins, or taken them up with him in his own body on the tree*; and to have there *once suffer'd for sin*, the just *for the unjust* 'Tis affirm'd likewise that he was once offer'd to *bear the sins of* many, which must be understood of his bearing them by way of imputation, and of his suffering for them in our stead, as the sacrifice was suppos'd to do for the sinner. This is evident as 1 Pet. ii. 24. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Heb. ix. 28.

[i] Vid. *Outram*, 310.

one has rightly observ'd [k], from the opposition which follows after the text, between Christ's first appearance, and his second. *He was once offer'd to bear our sins: But unto them that look for him shall he appear, the second time without sin unto salvation.* Why did he not appear the first time without sin? Yes certainly, as to any inherent guilt; what then is the meaning of the opposition, that at his first coming he *bore our sins*, but at his second, he shall appear *without sin unto salvation?* These words can have no other imaginable sense but this, that at his first coming he sustain'd the person of a sinner, and suffer'd instead. But his second coming shall be upon another account, and he shall appear not as a sacrifice but as a judge to confer eternal life on his followers." Our blessed Lord and Saviour having taken our room, stood charg'd with our sins, and bore the punishment due to them: These were the meritorious cause of all that he underwent. Accordingly is he said to have been *made sin for us*, (which may be understood of a *sacrifice* to *bear* and expiate our sins) likewise to have been *made a curse for us*. He suffer'd as a sacrifice for us, a cursed death. All this is reveal'd and taught by the evangelical prophet, in a remarkable variety of strong expressions. *Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, sustain'd the evils and penalties which were the desert of our sins, tho' *we* (the people

Isa. liii. 4. *& seq.* Lowth *on* Isa. *Chap.* liii. 5.

[k] *Tillotson*, V. i. p. 484.

of the *Jews*) *eſteem'd him ſtricken, ſmitten of God, and afflicted* [for his own crimes]. But [the truth is] *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, and bruis'd for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement or puniſhment of our peace was upon him*; and by *his ſtripes we are healed.* All *we like ſheep have gone aſtray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* Or as one tells us, the letter of the *Hebrew* runs, *The Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on him,* and to fall upon him. *He was oppreſs'd, and he was afflicted*; or as the ſame commentator tells us, the words may better be rendred, *It was exacted of him,* and *he anſwer'd* the *demand. He was cut off out of the land of the living*; yea, for *the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſtricken.* What he endur'd then was for our ſins, as a ſacrifice ſubſtituted in the room of us offenders and tranſgreſſors.

3. By his paſſion and death for us our ſins were *atoned* or *expiated,* the divine anger was *averted,* God *reconcil'd, impunity, pardon,* and *life* procured. He died in our ſtead, for our *greateſt good* and *benefit:* Whatever can be ſuppoſed to be the ſalutary effects of any propitiatory ſacrifice, muſt be, and are in ſcripture aſcrib'd to his death in a pleaſing variety of phraſe. The chaſtiſement of *our peace,* ſays the prophet, was *upon him,* in a fore-cited place; that chaſtiſement by which our peace was wrought,

and

and satisfaction made to Divine Justice. When *cut off*, not *for himself*, but for us, *He finish'd transgression, and made an end of sin,* and *reconciliation for iniquity*, and *brought in everlasting righteousness. We receive the atonement by him*, and *are reconciled to God by his death.* He *gave himself for us* an *offering*, even a sacrifice to God *of a sweet smelling savour*, most highly acceptable, and fully *appeasing*, such as the sacrifice of *Noah* after the deluge was; upon which God is said to have smelt a *savour of rest*, *i. e.* it made his anger to rest, as the *Jewish* writers tell us the phrase imports. Upon the account of the sacrifice of Christ the Lord is well pleas'd with those for whom it was offer'd, and he exhibits himself as on the throne of grace, or the mercy-seat. Whence Christ is said to be set forth as a *propitiation, thro' faith in his blood:* Where the word is well known to be the same with that by which in the Old Testament, the mercy-seat is still express'd. [a] The blood of Christ was shed for the *remission of sins unto many.* We have *redemption through this*, even *the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace:* 'Twas shed to *put away sin*, to destroy and abolish it, as the word signifies in regard of its guilt. This blood *cleanseth from all sin*; and hereby are we said to be *purged*, to be *wash'd*, and to be *sanctified*; which several expressions are to be understood in a *sacrificial* sense, and hold forth that freedom

Dan. ix. 24. Rom. v. 10, 11.

Ephes. v, 2.

Rom. iii. 25.

[a] Ἱλαστήριον.

Mat. xxv. 28. Ephes. iv. 7.

Heb. ix. 26. 1 John v. 7. Heb. ix. 14, 23. Rev. i. 5. Heb. x. 10.

dom from guilt, or releaſe from obligation to puniſhment, which we have by the blood of Chriſt ſhed for us *. *Hereby eternal redemption is* obtained. Hereby are we redeemed from ſin and Satan, from wrath and curſe, and redeemed unto God. Heb. ix. 11. 1 Pet. 1. 28 Rev. v. 9.

I hope by this time it is ſufficiently prov'd, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt offer'd himſelf a *real, true propitiatory ſacrifice*, and that his death is propos'd in the ſacred volumes as ſuch.

For the corroborating of what has been diſcours'd, I wou'd give you a quotation out of a late divine of the eſtabliſh'd church, wherein I take his remarks and reaſonings to be very juſt †. The notion of an expiatory ſacrifice was, when the new teſtament was writ, well underſtood all the world over, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This piece of religion had a great many phraſes belonging to it, ſuch as the ſacrifices being offer'd *for*, or *in ſtead of* ſin, and in the *name*, or on the account of the ſinner; it's *bearing of* ſin, and *becoming* ſin, or the ſin-offering; it's being the *reconciliation*, the *atonement*, and the *redemption* of the ſinner, by which the ſin was no more *imputed*, but *forgiven*, and for which the ſinner was accepted. When therefore this whole ſet of phraſes, in its utmoſt extent, is very often, and in a great variety apply'd to the death of Chriſt, it is not poſſible for us to

* They are ſuch expreſſions as other authors, Greek and Latin, uſe for their expiation.

† *Burnet*'s expoſition, p. 53.

preſerve

preserve any reverence for the new testament, or the writers of it, so far as to think them honest men, not to say inspir'd men, if we can imagine that in so sacred and important a matter, they cou'd exceed so much as to represent that to be our sacrifice, which is not truly so. This is a point that will not bear figures and amplifications; it must be treated of strictly, and with a just exactness of expression: and at the rate of some mens expounding the phrases relating to this, we can never know what we may build upon.

Before I put an end to the doctrinal part, some may be desirous that I should resolve them whence the *efficacy* of Christ's sacrifice does proceed; or to what is this owing; how comes it about that it is so available for the purposes of our redemption? And I answer to such, thro' the *nature* and *quality* of the sacrifice, in conjunction with the *Divine appointment*.

The intrinsick worth of the sacrifice of Christ is extremely great, arising both from his personal *purity* and *dignity*. Such an high-priest, and *sacrifice* too, became us, who was *holy, harmless, undefil'd, separate from sinners*; he liv'd and died in perfect spotless innocence, which is often taken notice as contributing to the value and vertue of his sacrifice; particularly where the apostle *Peter* speaks of the *precious blood* of Christ, as of an immaculate *Lamb without blemish and without spot*. And where the apostle to the

Heb. vii. 26.

1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

Hebrews

Hebrews says, *How much* rather *shall the blood of Christ, who thro'* the eternal *Spirit, offer'd himself without spot* to God, *purge the conscience* from dead works. His personal purity and holiness, is what partly renders his oblation in the sight of God and man, of great price: but especially his *personal dignity* does the same. When we add this to the other, the value is enhanc'd beyond what we have words to declare. Considering Jesus Christ only as man, the excellency of his person upon several accounts was so great, that he far surpass'd all the rest of mankind. But he is to be consider'd as more than a man, even as *Emanuel*, God with us, God manifested in the *flesh*. And sure the death of one who was so *eminent*, as well as innocent, who was God-man united, and the Lamb of God without spot or blemish, must be in the *nature* of it a sacrifice of *value* and *efficacy* unspeakable: It must be an atonement equal to the guilt of all our transgressions. And besides the consideration of its nature, there is the consideration of the divine *ordination* and *appointment*, to render it available. God might have exacted the punishment of our sins from *us*, made us *personally* suffer the desert of them; but for wise, holy and gracious ends, he was pleas'd to admit of *another*, even his own Son, (who was fully willing) to suffer in our stead. The Father decreed his being our sacrifice before the world and time began, as the apostle

Heb. ix. 14.

Mat. i. 23.

1 Tim. iii. 16.

apostle *Peter* intimates, when he says, Christ *a Lamb* without *blemish* and *without spot*, was *verily fore-ordain'd before the foundation* of the world. We are to look upon the whole of Christ's mediatory undertakings and performances, as being conformable to, and in compliance with the will of God the Father; particularly his incarnation, or assuming the human nature prepar'd for him, that he might become a propitiatory victim, is represented as being agreeable hereunto: *When he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepar'd me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo I come, (in the volume* of the *book it* is written *of me) I delight to do thy will,* O God. By the *which will* we *are sanctified*, as the apostle presently observes in the next verse.

1 Pet. i. 20.

John vi. 38.

So much may suffice for the doctrinal part, from whence I pass on to the practical use or improvement. And,

1.) Let us learn to set a higher value upon the gospel, and be more thankful for it, which reveals to us such a propitiation. The men of heathenism were, if not altogether, yet very much in the dark about the way of reconciliation to God, and the method of sinner's pardon and acceptance with him. This it concern'd them to know as much as any thing: but the wisest of their philosophers were unacquainted herewith.

with. From the consideration of the goodness and mercifulness of the Divine Being, they might indeed with some colour of reason hope, that he would shew himself placable to sinners, and might some way or other be reconciled. But when we come to examine more particularly what propitiation he will accept, and how shall a reconciliation be brought about, we find our selves encompass'd with difficulties. When it is ask'd whether, considering the heinous provoking nature of sin, the perfect holiness and justice of God, and his jealousy for the honour of his administration and government, it is consistent to pardon any sin? If it be, what, or what degrees of sin he'll forgive? whether great as well as small, many as well as few? whether remission is to be had without any satisfaction or reparation for the violation of his laws or not? upon what terms will he pardon and accept? Here are puzzling questions, not to be satisfactorily resolv'd by bare reason, or natural light. The heathens therefore were in uncertainty as to these things; and so should we be, was it not for the gospel. 'Tis here we have God proclaiming his name, the Lord God gracious and merciful; and are shewn how he can be so with a salvo to all his perfections, and the honour of his government.

Here we are assur'd, that there is forgiveness with him, plenteous and abundant for all manner of sin, founded as one would wish

wiſh it, to be upon a real ſuitable propitiation, or propitiatory ſacrifice. This ſhould be reckon'd (whatever it is by ſome) one of the diſtinguiſhing excellencies of the goſpel revelation; and for this ſhould we both prize it more, and praiſe God more for it.

2. Let awaken'd ſinners be inſtructed from the foregoing diſcourſe, in a duty that concerns their preſent and everlaſting peace. You whom the Spirit of God has been at work upon as a ſpirit of conviction, whoſe eyes he has been opening, to ſee ſin in its true colours, and behold your tranſgreſſions *wherein you have exceeded*; ſo that you begin to be fill'd with perplexing thoughts, and diſtreſſing apprehenſions on account hereof, and are ready to cry out (with thoſe convinc'd ſinners in the Acts) *what ſhall we do.* There is no need for you to ſink into deſpair; help is laid for you, upon one who is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, even Jeſus Chriſt; he is an all-ſufficient Peace-maker and Saviour, flee to him, embrace and confide in him thus conſider'd.

To quicken and encourage hereunto, I would ſuggeſt the following things. Chriſt is the *only* propitiation, there is no other beſides in heaven or on earth; you can't propitiate God your ſelves; nothing that you can perform or ſuffer, is able to make compenſation for your iniquities and tranſgreſſions. Your *ſole* help and relief then, remember, is in the blood and atonement of Chriſt: and here

here is adequate relief for them. Tho' you have been ſome of the vileſt and chief of ſinners, his blood hath virtue enough in it to cleanſe you from *all ſin*. Remember further, that Chriſt is ſet forth to be a propitiation by God himſelf; not only in regard to the publick manifeſtation, or open diſcovery which is made of him in the goſpel, but the *propoſals* and tenders likewiſe which are made of him here. The language of the goſpel is, whoſoever will, let him apply to Chriſt, and act faith on him as the propitiation. And ſhall any of us then ſlight and neglect him, inſtead of betaking our ſelves to him? God forbid! O let us all be concern'd to comply with the goſpel-call, and do it without delay: take heed of indulging a procraſtinating ſpirit. Rom. iii. 25.

3. Let ſuch of us as have been inclin'd and enabled to do this, take the comfort which belongs to us: we who are true believers in the name of the Son of God, or ſincere Chriſtians. He is *our* propitiation, our atoning Sacrifice. It may be our ſins have been great as well as numerous, but they are all forgiven. We find the perpetual workings of indwelling ſin and corruption; ſad ſtrugglings of the fleſh againſt the ſpirit; daily infirmities break out, daily follies and miſcarriages attend us: but there is no condemnation to us. We *are*, and ſhall be continued for ever in a pardoned ſtate. We may boldly ſet the ſufferings and death

of our Saviour *againſt all our ſins.* How much ſoever there may be in theſe, to excite God's anger againſt us, there is enough in the oblation of Chriſt to turn it away, and to induce him to be propitious and gracious to us. When we lay the hand of our faith on the great victim, we may do it with *triumph*, ſaying in the language of the apoſtle, *Who ſhall lay any thing to our charge, who are God's elect*, and have the *faith of ſuch? It is God that juſtifieth, Who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died for us, and is riſen again.*

4.) What an admirable, as well as endearing and obliging diſcovery have we of the love of God and Chriſt, in that he is appointed to be a propitiation for us. O that we who believe did take notice of this, ſo as to be more ſuitably affected with it! Herein is love, ſays the apoſtle, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the Propitiation for our ſins. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath thus beſtowed upon us!* What a prodigy of love is here, that he whom we had ſo highly offended, and whoſe indignation and wrath we had juſtly incurred, that he ſhould part with *his Son* for us, an *own* and *only begotten Son*, and freely conſent to his becoming our ſacrifice, and undergoing our puniſhment. Herein is the love of God, even the Father, commended to us in the moſt affecting endearing way imaginable.

1 John iv. 10.

And

And ſo is the love of Chriſt too. Who *loved us*, ſays the apoſtle, and *gave himſelf for us an offering and a ſacrifice*. By this it appears, that he loved us, and *how much* alſo, at what a mighty rate! O the ſtupidity of our hearts that we are no more touch'd and mov'd with this love, that we feel no more ſuitable impreſſions from it! May we meditate on it (particularly on all ſacramental occaſions) till we are affected with the wonders of it, and experience its melting conſtraining influence.

5. Let it ſerve to create in us a greater dread and deteſtation of ſin, to conſider, that Chriſt is the Propitiation for it. From hence may we eaſily gather the odious and incenſing nature of ſin. Did it not diſpleaſe and provoke the Lord to anger, there would be no need of any propitiation *at all* for it: and did it not provoke his anger in the higheſt degree, there would have been no need of *ſuch* a propitiation. Horrid evil! that could be aton'd and expiated by no leſs a perſon than the Son of God, and by no fewer ſufferings than he underwent. May we all, in conſideration hereof, watch and ſtrive more againſt it; and not only as being *moved by fear*, but as prompted by *gratitude*, and *holy ingenuity* likewiſe. That ſhould teach us to avoid all ſinful practice, ſeeing hereby the bittereſt agonies and ſorrows of our Lord Jeſus were procur'd, and ſeeing he bore theſe to free us from the penal conſequences thereof.

6. Let

6. Let us be frequently renewing our faith upon Christ as our Propitiation; live much by faith upon him under this character. Don't the circumstances of our present imperfect state call for it? We are offending all in many things, more than we our selves are sensible. We can't understand our errors, nor enumerate our swervings from the divine rule. And how shall any of these be forgiven, but in consideration of the Redeemer's sacrifice? Has not this made way for the honourable exercise of Divine Grace and Mercy towards us? Let us be accordingly looking to it, pleading and depending on it. May we keep up a believing sense of the *necessity* and *all-sufficiency* of the atonement of Christ, that this, which is a principal glory of our religion, may be, as one says, [l] our daily food, the support and life of our souls.

To conclude, The view of Christ as our Atonement or propitiatory sacrifice, is a proper allurement towards the upper world, and should serve to raise our hearts and affections towards heaven [m], and make us willing to go thither in the appointed time. There lives our loving lovely Jesus, our dear and blessed Lord, who hath ransom'd our lives from destruction, by dying in our stead.

[l] Dr. *Watts*.

[m] See the last use in the application of this author's excellent discourses on the atonement of Christ, *p.* 188.

There

There he reigns, and Is exalted on the throne as King of Glory, who once hung on the croſs as our ſacrifice of atonement. And can we be content to live at this diſtance, to be always thus ſeparated from him? Should we not aſpire and wiſh to be *nearer* him, to be in his *immediate* preſence, to ſee this illuſtrious incomparable friend *face to face*; to ſurvey his glories, and to ſhew forth his praiſes; to render thanks to him for our ſhare in his wondrous, redeeming, dying love; to unite our joyful acclamations and hallelujahs with thoſe of ſaints about the throne, and to join with them in ſinging that ſuitable doxology, *To him that lov'd us, and waſh'd us from our ſins in his own blood, that he might make us kings and prieſts to God even his Father*: To HIM *be glory and dominion for ever and ever Amen.*

The End of the firſt Sermon.

CHRIST THE CHRISTIAN'S PROPITIATION AND ADVOCATE.

1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.

---And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the Propitiation for our sins.

SERM. II. IN these words we have two *glorious* and *delightful* characters of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The latter, with which I began, as chusing to follow the order of time, has been dispatch'd: And I now proceed to the other, namely, that of *Advocate*. In treating on which I shall only do two

these two things, besides directing to a suitable improvement at the close.

I. I shall endeavour to state the *notion* of Christ's advocacy, or explain the *meaning* of his character as an Advocate. Then,

II. I shall discourse of his more remarkable properties thus consider'd, especially what we have an intimation of from the text.

I. I would state the notion of Christ's advocacy; or explain his character as an Advocate. The original word which we translate *Advocate* occurs but seldom in the New Testament. 'Tis used by none of the writers of it save the apostle *John*. Four times we meet with it in his Gospel, where it is apply'd to the *Holy Ghost*, and still rendred *Comforter*. Once we find it in his epistles, *viz.* here in the text, where it is attributed to *Christ*, and fitly enough rendred by *Advocate*. This is a *Law-term*, alluding to tryals and proceedings in courts of judicature: And it is used in a more *restrain'd* and *enlarg'd* sense. According to the *stricter* sense of the term, it denotes a person who *undertakes another's cause*, and is *assisting* to him in it all he is able; who is employ'd to solicite it, or to plead and maintain it for him, and uses what wisdom and eloquence he is master of to issue it well. Particularly if he, for whom another is an advocate in a cause depending, has indictments laid, or accusations brought a-

παράκλητος

gainst him, the business of the Advocate is to reply hereto, and offer all that he can towards defending and clearing of him: or however, to address the judge in his behalf, and so procure grace and favour to be extended towards him. This was the part and office of an advocate strictly speaking, to be a *Patron* to his client, and *argue* and *plead* for him; to *defend* his cause, and take care that it might not be lost. But the word was used in a *larger* sense than this; for as a very good writer tells us [n], there were other *advocati*, and especially *Paracleti* amongst the *Greeks*, who did not plead or maintain the cause, but did only *assist with their presence*, or at most, intreat and intercede by way of petition to the judge. Such as were the friends of the *reus* (the guilty or accus'd party) call'd by him to his assistance, who lent him (as it were) their presence, and by a personal appearance for him, or else interceſſions on his behalf, sway'd and inclin'd the judge to befriend him as much as possible, and to issue the matter depending in his favour. Now Jesus Christ is an Advocate for his people, in the *largest* and *fullest sense* of the word. He heartily espouses their cause, and doth what is equivalent to managing and pleading it for them. They have one who is a grand irreconcilable adversary to them, a *court-adversary*, or *adversary at law*, one

[n] *Pearson* on the Creed, 329.

who

who is vehemently against their cause, (as the name by which he is called signifies) one who not content with shewing himself an enemy to them in *tempting*, shews himself to be a worse enemy afterwards, in *accusing*. But Christ is a more powerful friend than he is an enemy in *this* and whatever other respects he manifests himself to be so *. Our Advocate quashes all the *indictments* and accusations which he can bring in; *obviates* and *invalidates* his manifold *charges*; *defeats* him still in his malicious purposes and intentions; gets a merciful absolving sentence to be past, and procures indemnity from the punishment merited by our crimes. He lives to *make intercession for* his people, which is another form of speech, to set forth his advocacy. He *interests* himself in our grand depending spiritual concerns, lays them to heart, and negotiates them in heaven; taking care both to secure and to promote them.

ἀντίδικος 1 Pet v. 8. Rev. xii. 10. Rom. 8. 34. Heb. 7. 25.

This will be more evident, by enquiring into the chief *instances* of his advocacy, or considering *how it is* performed by him. And according to the Scripture-account, by which all our conceptions of it are to be regulated, it consists in the three following particulars.

1. Christ's *exhibiting* or *presenting himself* above in heaven, before his Father, in *our name* and *behalf*. This we are taught by the apostle to the *Hebrews*, where (com-

* Nomen Christo tribuitur oppositè ad diabolum qui dicitur κατήγορος *Pol. Syn.*

paring

paring Christ with the high-priests of old, and in order to manifest his preeminence above them) he saith, that *Christ is not entered into the holy places*, the sanctuary, or holy of holies, *made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, the proper heaven, there to appear in the presence of God, his real immediate presence, for us.* He stands in the Father's sight, and as it were before his face, according to the import of the term *. And he appears not barely under the notion of our *friend*, but of our *Representative*, *Mediator*, and High-priest; so that he exhibits himself in *our stead*, and on *our account:* even as *Aaron* and his successors of old went into the most holy place, representing the children of *Israel*, and carrying their names in the breast-plate of judgment upon their hearts, when they ministred there before the Lord. Christ appears above in the heavenly sanctuary, as one that hath offer'd himself in his death and blood-shedding, and hereby made satisfaction and reconciliation for the sins of his people. The same human nature, which he had whilst on earth, in which he *bore their* sins, was *wounded* for *their transgressions*, and *bruised for their* iniquities, *this* he hath carried with him to heaven, and there retains. He not only has the same soul which we read *was made an offering* for sin, but the same body (as to substance) which was

Exod. xxviii. 29.

* Vid. *Pol. Syn.*

broken

broken for us, which was nailed to the cross, and suffer'd, bled and died there. So that there is a presentation of his *sacrific'd humanity to* the Father, or of himself as a *Lamb slain* and offer'd to God; and he shews himself cloathed with all the merits of his obedience unto death. Accordingly he appears to *John* in vision, under the image of a *Lamb*, as *it had been* slain, *standing in the midst of the throne*; i. e. as one who hath offer'd a sacrifice, the vertue of which to expiate sin, is always fresh and unimpair'd, and cannot be worn out by time. Some, I know, are of opinion, that this passage may import, his bearing in his glorified body the scars and *marks* of his bypast death, or his retaining certain impressions of the wounds he receiv'd in his crucifixion *. And it cannot be denied that these things were visible in him *after* his *resurrection*, as it was meet they should, that his disciples might be more fully convinc'd of the truth of that important fact, and might have no room to question whether the same body and person which was crucified was risen again. But I very much doubt, whether there are any such things remaining *now*, or whether he carried them with him to heaven. However, he *exhibits himself* as one that by dying has satisfy'd for our offences, and there is a kind of *presentation and offering* of his *blood* Rev. v. 6.

* *Vid. Clark*'s expositon, *Flavel* V. 1. p. 58. *Scot*'s Christian life 408.

for

for us, made by him in the sanctuary above The apostle therefore asserts, that neither *by*
Heb. ix. 12. *the blood of goats and calves*, but by and with *his own* blood, *he enter'd in once into* the holy *place:* and this in a correspondency to the practice of the Jewish high-priest, who, as the apostle takes notice before, went once *every year*, viz. *on the anniversary* of expiation, by himself into *the second tabernacle*, not *not without blood*, which he offer'd for himself, and for the errors of the people, *i. e.*
Verse 7. which he *thus offer'd*, or which he had *before offer'd* for them. The same is further confirm'd by the apostle's stiling his blood
Ch. xii. 24. the *blood of sprinkling*, with a plain allusion to the various sprinklings of blood by divine institution under the old testament, especially what was perform'd by the high-priest on the day of atonement in the holy of holies, the most signal instance of any other. And we have another proof of this, in his attributing to our Saviour's blood by an usual figure, an *interceding voice*, and assuring us,
Verse 24. that it *speaks better things than the blood of Abel. Abel*'s blood cried for vengeance, not formally and vocally, but virtually and efficaciously: so does the blood of Christ for what is *better*, pardon, reconciliation, and eternal redemption. It pleads for these as much as if it had an articulate voice, yea, far more powerfully and emphatically than it is possible for any verbal oratory to do *.

* Vid. *Scot.* 408.

Christ's

Christ's presenting his sacrificed humanity, and the memorials of his death to the Father, or *appearing in the presence of* God in the *names*, and on the *accounts* of his people, is a main thing, and of principal regard in his advocation and intercession. But.

2. This is also perform'd by a *signification* of his *mind* and *will* on our behalf. Tho' I take it to consist *chiefly* in actions, yet not *wholly* and *altogether* as some do. There is moreover, I apprehend, as belonging to it, a signifying, or making known of *requests*. All intercession seems to carry in it in general somewhat of the true nature of prayer. And we may gather from our Saviour's own declarations, that he doth in a sense *now addres's* to, and *petition* the Father. *At that day*, says he to his disciples, *ye shall ask in my name*: where he refers undoubtedly to a time *after* his ascension: And *I say not that I will pray the Father for you*; I don't insist upon that, as if he had said, or I need not tell you that: you may easily gather it from the proofs of love towards you, which I have given, and shall further speedily give. Or, I don't *only* say that, but I say *more*. We may understand it either way; and so it will imply a *sort* of prayer in Christ's advocacy and intercession. Which is more evident yet, from his telling his disciples, that he *would pray the Father for them*; in consequence of which, the Comforter, that is, the Holy Ghost, should be given to supply John xvi. 26.

the

the want of his bodily presence, by abiding with them for ever. For as to the time when he should make good this promise, 'tis plain he means, when he was departed from them, after his leaving the world, and return to the Father.

John xiv. 26.

His praying *now* indeed, must be conceived of as vastly different from what it was whilst here on earth. *Then* he *offer'd up prayers and supplications* with *strong crying*, or vehement outcry, and *tears* likewise, as the apostle acquaints us. But nothing like this can be affirm'd of him now. His exalted glorified condition won't admit of such *servile* way of praying, as some of the ancients have stiled it. Whatsoever he doth in his priestly capacity, is in such a manner as will comport with the royal authority and dignity he is advanced to: for he is a *Priest upon his throne*, as the prophet foretels. We are to take heed therefore how we imagine any thing of a supplicatory behaviour in his addressing to the Father for us, of bended knees, or uplifted hands, or low prostrations: yea, we are not to suppose, that Christ asks in a *precarious* way, or so, as not to assert a *claim* of *right* in the blessings that his intercession is conversant about. He expresses not barely *desire* as to the granting of these, but *will* also; solicits for the bestowment, as one that has authority to demand it. *Father I will*, was the stile which he us'd here on earth: much rather

Heb. v. 6.

Zech. vi. 13.

John xvii. 24.

rather does he use the same above in heaven: *I will* that the iniquities of *those whom thou hast given me*, and who believe on my name, be pardoned; that their corruptions be subdued; fresh supplies of the sanctifying Spirit afforded; that they may have all necessary grace and strength to carry them thro' the various services and trials of life; that during their abode in the world, they may be kept from the evil; and at last, that they be *with me where I am*, to be made fully happy in my immediate presence and enjoyment.

How it is that Christ signifies and makes known his desire or will to the Father, cannot with certainty be determined. The Popish expositors indeed tells us, some of them, that it is done *orally* and *vocally*; whilst others insist upon its being done *silently* and *mentally*. "Many testimonies, "says the learned doctor *Owen* *, are pro- "duced by them out of the fathers, upon "the one side and the other; and great "weight is laid by some on the difference "and determination of it. But, as he goes "on to observe, our principal concernment "lieth in the internal form of the intercession of our High-Priest, rather than the "outward manner of it, tho' so far as that "is reveal'd, it belongs to us, and we "may enquire into it". 'Tis enough for us to know, that his advocacy contains a kind of *prayer* in it, and that he signifies his

* *Vid.* Exposition on the *Hebrews*, Vol. 2. 245.

mind and will to the Father, so as to be *perfectly understood.* The desires of his heart are all really *before* God, and equally regarded as if they were to be set forth in the most expressive, moving and pathetical language.

3. We may reckon, as compriz'd within the advocacy of Christ, his presenting and *recommending our regular prayers*, and *requests* to the Father, so as to procure *acceptance* and *success* to these *. They pass as it were thro' his hands, and he hallows and consecrates them all. They are purified in the vertue of his atoneing blood, and seconded and enforc'd (if I may be allow'd so to speak) by his intercession †. Upon this account may he be esteem'd and call'd the *Master of requests*, to whom it is owing that our petitions have admittance into heaven, and find a favourable reception there. He causes a cloud of incense to ascend before God with them. Agreeable to what we read in the book of *Revelations*, of an *Angel's standing* at the *golden altar, and offering up the* prayers of the saints, *perfumed with incense that he adds to them.* 'Tis the general opinion of interpreters, I believe, that by this angel we are to understand not a common or created angel, but

Rev. viii. 3, 4.

* Nos et nostra generatim, speciatim preces nostras Deo commendat. Vid. *Outram.* 359.

† Preces nostras tam sacrificii sui odore sanctificat, quam patrocinii favore adjuvat. *Calv.* in loc.

he

he who is call'd the *angel of the covenant*, even our Lord Jesus Christ, the great High-priest of the church. He is here describ'd in his sacerdotal office, and in terms and phrases plainly alluding to a certain part of the ministry of the *Jewish* priesthood, which consisted in *burning incense*. This was appointed to be done twice a day, at the golden altar, which therefore was stil'd the altar of *Incense*; as well as once a year in the Holy of Holies. And it was intended for a *symbol* or *emblem* of the *prayers* of the people, which were *mystically* offer'd up to God therewith *. And accordingly they us'd to be praying in the outward court all the while this priestly function was discharging within the sanctuary and temple. In conformity to this, is Jesus Christ our High-priest describ'd as *presenting* or *offering* our *prayers*, *incensed* and *perfum'd* by his mediation and merits. There is abundantly enough in him to recommend them, to give them efficacy and success. For which reason he is said to have *much incense*; *i. e.* as † Dr. *Owen* expounds it, a bottomless store and treasure of righteousness and merit, which, says he, is added unto the prayers and whole worship of his people, and is the only sweet perfume in the presence of the Lord.

Lev. xxx. *begin.*

Luke i. 10.

* Vid. *Scot.* 412.

† Dr *Owen* on the person of Christ 348.

Hence we are enjoin'd to *do all, whatever* we *do in* the worship and service of God, *in his name.* And he himself hath taught us to come to God the Father, by *him*, and to put up our prayers depending upon his mediation above. The exercise of his priestly office in *heaven*, as well as on earth, is of use in procuring for us a *free access* to God in devotion, and *audience* and *acceptance* to our prayers and requests. The apostle therefore we may observe infers our coming boldly to the throne of Grace, or addressing ourselves to God with freedom and confidence, for seasonable *mercy* and *help in time of need*, from our having a *great High-priest* that *is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.* To the same purpose is that other remarkable passage, where, in consideration of our *having liberty to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and lively way, which he hath consecrated for us thro' the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and in consideration of our having* an *High-priest over the house of God* (who still acts in his real presence for us) we are exhorted to *draw nigh to God in his worship with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith.*

And thus have I endeavour'd to explain the nature of the advocacy of Christ, and to shew wherein it consists, or in what instances it is perform'd.

Colos. iii. 16.

John xiv. 6, 14. xvi. 26.

Heb. iv. 14, 16.

Cap. x. 19, & seq.

I am

I am in the next place, according to the method propos'd, to consider his *properties* as an Advocate, especially those that are intimated by the apostle in the text. We *have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

1. Then he is a *common* Advocate for the *whole houshold* of *faith.* This seems to be hinted by the apostle in his saying, *We* have him with the Father. 'Tis not *I*, but *we*, or the *church*, as the learned *Grotius* observes *: not only we *apostles*, but we *believers*, or Christians in general, as Mr. *Charnock* and others paraphrase it †. The same persons are meant that he speaks of in the former chapter, as having *communion with God*, and walking *in the light*, as *he is in the light:* the same that he writes to as his *dear children*, and whom he supposes to be still liable to the commission of sin. The apostle chose, I conceive, to express *himself* in this manner, on purpose to include himself in the number of them who by reason of daily sinning stand in need of the advocacy of Christ, and to signify their having a *joint interest* with him herein.

'Tis true that our blessed Lord, in the intercessory prayer which he offer'd just before his passion, has a respect *primarily* to his *apostles*, as such: and the like respect

* Non dicit, habet ille Advocatum, sed ecclesia quæ pro lapso precatur. *Pool Syn.* † *Charnock* 1110. *Hardy* in loc.

might he manifest, perhaps, in his intercession above in heaven. But this certainly was never intended to be confin'd to them: It belongs to the *whole* church, or to sincere believers and christians *universally*. In that forementioned prayer therefore, (which in the current opinion of our Divines, is a *model* of Christ's present intercession) after he has finish'd his requests for the *apostles*, he comes to pray for *others*, even for *all* John xvii. 20. *that should believe on him thro' their word*; whether as preach'd by them, or as committed to writing. He is an *Intercessor* or *Advocate* for all true believers; and this not only *collectively* consider'd, or as comprehensively taken in a *body*, but for *each* I apprehend, singly consider'd, and for every individual. His advocacy affords a much *stronger relief* in case of sinning, allowing this *particularity* of it, or that it belongs not only to *all* Christians in general, but to *each*. And what less than this can be denoted by the apostle's affirming, If *any* of us sin there is one to perform the part of an Advocate for us. Christ is an *High-* Heb. x. 2. *priest over* the *house of God*, presiding over, and acting for every member hereof. He Heb. x. 21. *knows who are his*, and can call all his 2 Tim. iii. 19. sheep by *name:* He has a *distinct* acquain- John x. 3. tance with them, and their several respective cares and circumstances: And his intercession is manag'd for them, agreeable to such knowledge and acquaintance: He has a personal

personal regard then to each of them therein. What he did for *Peter* in praying for him *personally*, when he was about to be assaulted violently by the tempter, I don't see why he may't be reckon'd to do for others of his disciples: especially, considering the affection he bears to them all, and the charge he hath of every one's person. I can't be of their sentiments who take this to have been a privilege peculiar to *Peter* himself, or a favour shewn him as the head of the apostles. Christ does the like for others *. There is not the poorest weakest believer, whose faith is genuine, but may conclude, he is the object of our Saviour's intercession. He has an eye in it to the *Lambs of the flock*. Luke xxii. 32. Isa. xl. 11.

2. He is an Advocate *as fully qualified* as we could wish. For

1.) He is one who does not act without a proper commission. *God the Father*, who in the œconomy of Grace, is represented as the prime Mover and Agent, and sustains the character of supreme Ruler, Law giver, and Judge, (with whom therefore his business as an Advocate lies) hath not only *admitted*, but *appointed* him to be such; and he is invested in the office by *his* solemn designation, unction, and oath. We meet with several passages to this purpose in the epistle to the *Hebrews*. No *one taketh the honour*, says the apostle, (*viz.* of priesthood) *i. e.* no one can rightfully assume it, Chap. v. 4, 5.

* Vid. *Pol. Synops.*

But he who is called to it of God as Aaron was. And so [also was it with our Lord] *Christ,* [for he] *glorify'd not himself to be made our High-priest,* but he appointed him to be so, who said unto him, *Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* As *he* Ver. 6. *saith also* [of him] *in another place, thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec:* [who seems to have been however chiefly, a priest of intercession, and whose was a royal priesthood]. Christ was Ver. 10. *call'd,* or constituted of *God an High-priest after his order. The word of the oath,* which was spoken after the giving of the Psal. cx. 4. law, and is recorded in the *Psalms,* has *Chap.* vii. 27. *fixt* him in this great office. So that there is no doubt but the honour of it belongs to him, who has receiv'd a commission and authority from *God the Father* himself for it. And hereby is he *empower'd* to execute it in *both* its parts, making intercession as well as making reconciliation. The commission extends *equally* to both.

The apostle is thought to give a hint of the needful qualification I have been speaking of, in the term *Christ* *. We have an Advocate *Jesus Christ,* one anointed by the Father for the whole office of mediation, the whole work of salvation, and consequently for that of Intercessor or Advocate. He is no intruder then into this high post

* Vid. *Charn.* 1114. *Hardy* in loc. and *Reynolds* in the continuation of Mr. *Henry*'s exposit.

and office, but came into it regularly by the authoritative appointment of God the Father. Whence,

2.) He must be a very *able* Advocate. Men may elect or appoint to offices those that are insufficient and no ways equal to 'em. But this is weakness which we must by no means impute to God; and least of all can we imagine him to be guilty of it in an affair of the highest nature and importance, in making choice of Christ, and employing him as his servant to bring about our redemption. The Father knew he might safely *confide* in him, as one *equal* to the work which he *gave him to finish*, and who would not *fail* in any part of his undertaking. Had he not been fully satisfy'd in his abilities for discharging the several offices of a Mediator, and amongst the rest that of priesthood, in either of its parts, he would not have vested him herewith. His sufficiency then as an Advocate may be inferr'd from the Father's *appointment*: And the same may be evinc'd from the consideration of what he is in *himself*. *Counsel is his, and sound wisdom*, and he has *understanding* as well as *strength*. He needs not to be taught what is incumbent upon him as an Advocate; for he perfectly knows the duties of his office, and is skilful to discharge it to the best advantage. He has a clear insight into the circumstances and wants of his clients, and is capable of ap-

Isa. xlii. 1.

Prov. viii. 14.

plying to the Father for them in a due manner on all occasions. He is ever furnish'd with the most suitable and powerful pleas, to alledge and urge on their behalf. He
Col. ii. can no more *mismanage* a cause than he can *mistake* it. Those treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the apostle declares him to be possess'd of, must needs secure against any weak imprudent step in the course of his advocacy.

3.) He is an *acceptable* Advocate, one *highly esteem'd* and *well belov'd* of him with whom his business thus consider'd lies. This is a farther desirable and recommending qualification in him. Persons wish in all human causes to have their advocate not only able but approv'd likewise, respected of the judge, and a favourite of the court where he pleads. Such a one is the Christian's Advocate: which is thought to be intimated to us in his being said to be *with the Father*, and to be *Jesus Christ* †; for hereby are we easily led to think of him as the *Son of the Father*, according to the addition made to these personal names by
2 Eph. v. 3. the apostle elsewhere. Jesus Christ *the Son of the Father*. He is a Son in that high peculiar sense, which no other, whether on earth, or in heaven is: the *Father's own*,
Heb. i. 5. *begotten, only begotten Son*, as he is stiled in

† Habemus advocatum, eumq; eximium valde. nempe Jesum Christum, *i. e.* qui Christus ille Dei est, & Dei filius unicus, apud Patrem in flagrantissima gratia. *Slichtin.* in loc.

divers

divers places, to expreſs both his true *Deity* and his *dearneſs* to the Father. The intimate and near relation he ſtands in, is doubtleſs attended with a proportionable affection. And hence we find him often repreſented as the *Son of his love*, or his *dear Son*, and *the beloved in whom he is well pleas'd.* Yea the Father's *ſoul* is ſaid to *delight* in him, which as it ſpeaks the *nature*, ſo likewiſe the *degree* of his affection, even the *intenſeneſs* and *vehemency* of it. And the aſſertion there reſpects him primarily however, in his *mediatorial capacity*; or whereinſoever he acts, as the Father's *ſervant* for the purpoſes of his glory and our ſalvation. He is then the object of the Father's eſpecial complacential love as our Advocate. The Father is highly pleas'd with him executing this office; and he endear'd himſelf the *more* to him at the ſame time he was laying a foundation for the execution of it; I mean in ſuffering and dying, or becoming a ſacrifice for our ſins. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.*

Rom. viii. 32. John i. 18. iii. 16, & *alib.* Col. i. 13. Iſa. xlii. 1. John x. 17.

4.) He is a *holy ſinleſs* Advocate. This is the moſt proper ſignification of the word we tranſlate righteous *; and 'tis the conſtant ſignification of it when aſcrib'd to Chriſt elſewhere, as it is in about ten places in the New Teſtament. Accordingly we find the apoſtle *Peter*, when ſpeaking of

* Δίκαιος.

him, and taxing the *Jews* with their sin in denying him, connects *holy* and just as synonymous terms. *Ye denied the holy one and the just.* And he is in like manner emphatically called by the apostle *John*, *The holy One.* He was and is altogether *blameless* and *innocent*, absolutely free from sin. The author to the *Hebrews* uses a *variety* of terms to describe his personal purity and holiness to us: he seems to *multiply* expressions (after the manner of the *Hebrews*) for this purpose, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.* Some I know are of opinion, that there is a difference in each of these characters, and they pretend to tell us *how* they differ. But whether they can do that or no, 'tis certain that the spotless purity of Christ our High Priest is intended to be signified by them all. And tho' they well agree to him, and are true of him, with respect to the life he lived here on *earth*, yet they seem to be rather meant of him in his *present state.* It follows therefore, *who is made higher than the heavens.*

Acts iii. 14. ὁ ἅγιος

Ch. vii. 25.

He is the most remote from sin that can be, for 'tis impossible he should sin. Impeccability is deservedly reckoned amongst the excellencies and perfections of Christ, which flow'd from the hypostatical union of the two natures in him *.

And his fitness for the office of Advocacy, is in a good measure owing to this. In or-

* *Lightfoot*, V. 2, 351.

der

der to the successful discharge of it, 'twas necessary he should be perfectly righteous, holy, and sinless. Personal purity and innocency indeed is not always a necessary qualification of advocates in courts of judicatures here below. For tho' a man be an unjust bad man himself, yet having a righteous cause (and the cause of a just person in that respect) he may succeed *. But personal righteousness and innocence is an essential qualification of him that is our Advocate in the court above. 'Tis fit that he should stand *Rectus in Curiâ* himself, blameless and just in court, and in the sight of the Judge, seeing his clients are otherwise. Was he a sinner, he would be no wise a proper person to undertake the office of an advocate for sinners; John ix. 31. God *heareth not such*, without the interposition and mediation of some other on their behalf. If Christ had any sin, he could not *be* in heaven, much less could he be a *pleader* or *intercessor* there, as Mr. *Charnock* observes †. Whatever other qualifications he might be suppos'd to have, if he wanted this of *purity*, he would not be *such an High Priest* or *Advocate* as *became us*. Heb. vii. 26.

5.) He is a faithful Advocate. The epithet the apostle bestows upon him, may point us to that also; for sometimes righteous imports as much as being faithful *. Christ our Advocate is so in the highest degree. Disappointment shall never shame any

* Vid *Reynolds* in loc. † 1121. * *Slichtin* in loc. & *Hardy*.

of

of the hopes which are built upon him, with a regard to this, any more than the hopes we place in him, with a regard to other parts of his mediatorship. We may rest assur'd he won't fail us in our regular expectations. There is not the least room to *suspect* his *fidelity*. The apostle to the *Hebrews* asserts it once and again, as what should minister no small consolation to us. Jesus the *High Priest of our profession*, says he, *was faithful to him that appointed him, even as Moses was in all his house.* And he *is a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* His faithfulness was manifested in the *former* part of his priesthood, *viz.* making reconciliation: and it is no less conspicuous in the other, making intercession, or being an Advocate; for *this* is included in the things which his priestly office is here made to consist in, (*viz.* things pertaining to God *, or affairs transacted with him for us,) no less than the other.

Cap. iii. 2.

Ch. ii. 17.

6.) He is a *kind, gracious, affectionate* Advocate. The term righteous may likewise lead our thoughts to *these* properties as belonging to him †: and we may be fully persuaded, by consulting other places of scripture, that they are to be found in him. He

* τὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν

† Justus, i. e. bonus, lenis, clemens, benignus. Sic δικαιοσύνη est bonitas, *Grot.* in loc. & in *Matt.* i. 19.

bears

bears a true affection and good will to all his clients, and hath a most tender care and concernment for them: is ready to imploy his power and interest for their benefit and advantage. As he sincerely wishes their happiness and salvation; so he is as intent to procure it now as ever: even as when he tabernacled amongst us here on earth, and when he hung on the cross, and poured forth his soul unto death. The love he then gave such signal and amazing demonstrations of, is not extinguish'd by his being in heaven, nor is it *cooled* or *abated* in the least. His heart remains the same towards his people *yesterday*, to *day*, and *for ever*: and he does, as it were, bear their names and cause upon it. They are related to him in the most endearing ways, not only as *friends*, but *brethren*, yea *children and members*. And he has a love for them, that contains in it that of all these several relations, and more. His advocacy springs from hence; and 'tis out of the tenderest affection he manages it for them, and so prosecutes the great and merciful design which he began here on earth. His love is *compassionate*, and has pity and *sympathy* mixed or join'd with it: and this as one of the happy fruits of his many, and grievous sufferings which he endured for us when in our world. From the experience and remembrance of these he can be, and is *touch'd*, or affected with a sense of our afflictions and sufferings,

and

and he must be more inclin'd to pity, and relieve us. The apostle particularly insists on this, as what should be a great comfort to us. *We have not an high priest,* says he, *who cannot be touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities,* but *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that* we may *obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* And again, *It behoved Christ in all things to be made like unto his brethren,* that he *might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. For in that he hath suffer'd,* being *tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

Heb. iv. 15, 16.

Ch. ii. 17, 18.

It appears then, that he is an Advocate qualified in all respects according to our wish.

3. He is a *constant perpetual* Advocate. This is thought to be clearly held forth in the apostle's saying, we *have* him with the Father; he speaks in the *present* tense, to signify the duration, as well as certainty hereof. 'Twas true, when the apostle wrote, and it has been true in every age since, and will be so to the end of time, that we who believe have an Advocate with the father *; have him continually with him in that capacity. Accordingly the author to the *Hebrews* asserts, that he is *enter'd into the true holy of holies* NOW, to *appear in the presence of God for us*: *now at* this present writing, and always. The word is expressive of the whole

Heb. ix. 24.

* Vid. *Charn.* 1110. 1125

season

season and duration of time, from the entrance of Christ into heaven, unto the consummation of all things *. In an agreement with which the apostle tells us, that he is set *down as a priest, on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens*, and continueth *a minister of the sanctuary*, and of *holy things*, as the margin reads it. Heb. viii. 2. 'Tis not merely a life of Glory, Majesty and Blessedness that he leads above, but of office and ministry likewise. He must perform some sacerdotal functions *still*, being *constituted a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.* Ps. cx. 4. But he has nothing more to do by way of *oblation*; what remains then, is by way of *intercession.* Heb. ix. 25. This he attends to statedly and incessantly. He resides always in the presence of the Father, is continually upon the *spot* (if I may so speak) to appear and act for us as occasion shall require. He is ready to put in a plea upon every fresh matter of charge that our adversary can bring against us, and to patronize *or desire* our cause. Does Satan accuse us *night and day* before God, as the scripture represents? Rev. xii. 10. with like diligence and statedness does Christ appear and plead for us. The accusations of the one can't be supposed more constant than the intercessions of the other. We have no manner of reason to fear our Advocate's being absent from the court, or his desisting from the exercise of his office there. The

* Dr. *Owen* in loc.

apostle

Heb. vii. 25. apostle tells us, that he *ever lives* to *make intercession for us.* Tho' this ben't the sole nor ultimate, yet it is one great end of his present heavenly life, and what he is perpetually imploy'd in.

4. He is a prevalent Advocate. There is no danger of his miscarrying in any cause which Ps. xxi. 2. he solicits. The Father certainly *grants him his heart's* desire, and *does not withhold the requests of his lips.* I might set this down as a *corollary*, from what has been discours'd: but 'twill not be amiss, if I enlarge a little in the proof of it, and resume some of the foregoing thoughts.

If we consider him then in the greatness of his person, or in the *near relation* he has to the Father, 'twill help to convince us, that he can't intercede, nor solicit in vain. What more likely to render his advocacy powerful and effectual, than his being the *Son* of the Father, his *own* and *only begotten* Son? If *Moses* a friend, or at most a child by *adoption*, had so much interest, as to be able to prevail for the averting of divine judgments from *Israel*, and God is represented as saying Ex. xxxii. 10. to him, *Let me alone*, that *my wrath may wax hot against this sinful people*, and *I may consume them:* What interest must the *begotten* Heb. i. 3. of the Father have, who is the *brightness* of *his Glory*, and the *express image* of *his person?* 'Tis observable, that when the decree is declared in those words, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, it presently

sently follows, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance*, &c. Ps. ii. 10.

Then consider him as a Son performing *obedience* and *service* at the *call* and *request* of the Father, and for the *manifestation* of his *Glory*; and as this can't but increase (if possible) paternal affections towards him; so it must facilitate his speeding in his addresses, and render the Father more inclinable to fulfil all his petitions. Even as a king (says Mr. *Charnock* *) will listen much sooner to the request of a son, who hath been signally serviceable to him, and brought honour to his name and government, than to a son barely in the relation of a child.

Further, the consideration of his being *righteous* or holy, strengthens the argument for the successfulness of his advocacy. We know how far the pleadings and intercessions of *just* men, such as *Abraham*, *Job*, *Moses*, and *Daniel*, have been prevalent: and the apostle *James* is express, that the *fervent inwrought prayer of* the *righteous* availeth much: for himself not only, but for others too. How available then must the interceding of Jesus Christ *the righteous*, *the just* one, perfectly and transcendently so be? Ch. v. 16.

Again, considering the *objects* of his intercession, those for whom he lives as an advocate, we shall find it helps to prove that he can't but succeed. They are those whom the Father is *well affected* to, and *dearly*

* 1134.

loves: not enemies nor strangers, nor servants and friends only, but *children.* The word *Father* is capable of being refer'd to *us*, as well as Christ, and it ought to be so doubtless, when it is affirmed we have an Advocate with the Father, *i. e. ours* as well as *his.* There is a great love that he bears to the clients as well as to the Advocate: yea, the love he bears to the one, resembles what he bears to the other. *Thou hast loved them*, as *thou hast loved me*, says Christ; and he would have this particularly remark'd by us. *I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you.*

John xvii. 23.

Ch. xvi. 26.

I might further suggest, as what will make the proof yet more strong, of his being successful, that the *matters* of his intercession are all perfectly *agreeable* to the Father's *will*; that he asks for nothing but what he hath *merited*, and divine justice will forward the bestowment of: that he is *with the Father* as our Advocate and Intercessor, performing the office in his immediate presence, and not at a distance. But so much for the doctrinal part. All that remains now, is to make some practical inferences and uses. And,

1. Let those be convinced of their unhappy state and circumstances, who remain *unmterested* in the advocacy of Christ, and are excluded the benefit hereof. I mean all who *persist* in impenitency and unbelief: who treat with negligence, if not with contempt, the gospel messages and invitations;

who refuse either to accept of Christ, or give up themselves to him, according to his claim; who addict themselves to sin, and live in the customary practice of it; who by the tenor of their lives discover, that this is the real inward sense of their souls, *we will not have the* Lord Jesus to reign over us. Would to God there were but few such to be found amongst us; 'tis to be fear'd their number is great. And of all of them, that positive declaration of the Redeemer holds true, I *pray not for them.* He won't *take up the names* of *such into his lips.* 'Twould be a reflection upon his holiness, as well as wisdom, to suppose him an Intercessor for persons of this character: and we should be apt to conclude from hence, that he was *the minister of sinners*, the very thought of which is rejected by the apostle with abhorrence. *We* have an Advocate, says the text, *we* who don't walk in darkness, but in the light; *we* who are brought with a penitential frame of heart to confess sin, and are indeed turn'd from it; *we* the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus: 'tis we that have him for an Advocate, none else may dare thus to appropriate him to themselves. As for unbelievers, and impenitent unsanctified souls, who continue such, they are so far from having Christ interceding for them, that they have him rather making intercession against them. They are so far from having a share in his pleadings for mercy, that they have a share in his

John xvii. 9. Ps. xvi. 4. Gal. ii. 17.

pleas for wrath and vengeance. His blood which they ſlight, and as it were trample upon, cries terribly againſt them. For † as it ſpeaks better things than the blood of *Abel*, for thoſe on whom it is ſprinkled; ſo it ſpeaks bitterer things for all ſuch who by unbelief and impenitence trample upon it. O that they *were wiſe, that they underſtood this*; that they might be ſenſible of their preſent miſerable condition, and not be eaſy till they experience an alteration!

2. Have we who are true believers and Chriſtians indeed, an Advocate in heaven, even Jeſus Chriſt? let us keep up an *affectionate eſteem* of him, and be more duly *thankful* for him thus conſider'd. Do we not need him, and that abſolutely? muſt we not look upon ourſelves to be highly indebted and obliged to him? Is not his diſcharging the office unſpeakably to our advantage? can we enumerate the precious fruits and effects of it? doth it not influence into our ſalvation, even to the perfecting and conſummating of it? *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt them that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them,* or to be their Advocate. How neceſſary and deſirable an office then is this? and could any diſcharge it better than our Jeſus does. Is he not an Advocate according to our wiſh, a matchleſs and incomparable one? Let his being ſo then excite and draw forth our

Heb. vii. 25.

† *Chaun.* 1150.

praiſes

praises for him, as well as render him more precious to us.

3. How careful ought persons to be of *intrenching* upon, and likewise *abusing* the office of this glorious Advocate. The Romanists are notoriously guilty as to the former, who join others with Christ, and employ them in the great affair of intercession with God. They have erected as many advocates almost, as they have canonized saints; and not content with these, they have angels too; and as superior to all the rest, the virgin *Mary*. But this practice of theirs is criminal and provoking, and we should by no means imitate them herein. There is not the least intimation given throughout the new testament, that Christians have, or may make use of, any other to mediate and intercede with God for them, besides the Lord Jesus Christ. Yea, for ever to take us off from all others, the apostle tells us, that as there is one God, so one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. He asserts the unity of the Mediator as strongly as he does that of God. Nor is the force of this text to be avoided, by distinguishing between a Mediator of *redemption*, and a Mediator of *intercession*. For this is a distinction arbitrarily coin'd, without any thing in scripture to countenance it; yea, there is enough here to overthrow it. For we are taught, that the intercession of Christ has a *relation* to, and *dependence* upon his *sacrifice*, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

that he is a Mediator and Advocate in heaven, in vertue of that oblation which he perform'd on earth. Hence we find his mediation and advocacy frequently mention'd together with his propitiation, and the expiation he made for us. So in that forecited place, *There is one Mediator who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.* And thus in the text we *have an Advocate, Jeſus Chriſt, who is the propitiation for our ſins.* It is plain then that the Mediator of redemption, and of advocacy muſt needs be one and the ſame perſon. None is qualified to be the latter who is not the former. And therefore to join others with Chriſt, and apply to them as patrons and interceſſors in heaven for us, is to act in contradiction to ſcripture; and this too without any *neceſſity.* For ſure the virtue and efficacy of Chriſt's interceſſion does not want for additions to it. He is fully capable of performing the office of advocation himſelf without the aſſiſtance of others. Accordingly the apoſtle ſpeaks not in the *plural* number in the text, as if there were many advocates, but in the *ſingular*, to ſhew that there is but *One*; who is all-ſufficient for us. We ſhould look upon the men of popery then with pity and concern, as boldly invading the office of Chriſt, and intrenching upon his prerogative; and we ſhould keep at the greateſt diſtance from their practice. And it behoves us to guard againſt *abuſing* the

advo-

advocacy of Christ. 'Tis a sad abuse of it if we presume upon it to sin wilfully against knowledge, or walk less circumspectly because we think we have an interest in it. This, as one says, is a prophanation of the holiness of our Advocate, as tho' he was settled in the office to beg a licence for our crimes *. We should consider our Saviour's advocacy as proper to animate us to maintain a constant vigorous warfare against all sin. 'Tis calculated for this purpose, and well adapted to serve it, seeing it affords relief when thro' human frailty and weakness, the policy of the tempter, or the surprize of temptation, we have been guilty of any thing sinful. Which leads me on to a fourth use;

4. Let us have daily frequent recourse to Christ our Advocate, learn to live more by faith upon him thus consider'd; especially in case of any remarkable miscarriages. Faith ought then to be acted and exercis'd in him afresh. We should believe him to be the Advocate the Gospel represents, realize to our selves his ability, righteousness, faithfulness, and other properties, and place our trust under the shadow of his wings. It becomes us indeed to be laid low for all our sins, particularly such as are any ways heinous in their own nature, or may be reckon'd so by reason of aggravating cir-

* *Charn.* 1144.

cumstances: We should be deeply humbled for these, arraign, accuse and judge ourselves; let godly sorrow have its free scope. But we ought not to give way to despondency. There is an Advocate above to solicite our cause and plead for us, who can procure an acquitting sentence: And we may be as sure of his doing this as that we have recourse to him with a believing penitent frame of heart.

5. Let the advocacy of Christ be improv'd for our *consolation* and *joy*. True Christians should above all others take heed of indulging to sadness, and walking disconsolately. This doth ill become them, considering how privileg'd they are, and particularly in having the Advocate with the Father, which they are assur'd of in the text: Have we indeed such a friend in heaven, one that is not unmindful of us, one that has a dear affection for us, who out of the tendereſt love and compassion is perpetually soliciting our cause and concernments? How chearing and delighting is the thought! What comfort and joy should it not inspire into us!

Is it this and the other affliction that dejects us? We may comfort ourselves that by vertue of the interposal of our Advocate we are only *chastned of the Lord* that we should not be *condemn'd with the world*: And he sympathiseth with us under all afflictions,

and will obtain for us suitable supports, and in due time full deliverance.

Is it the smallness and weakness of grace that dejects us? Are we complaining that we have *but a little strength*, and desire more Christ's advocacy may minister comfort to us? For he is pleading for us that our faith and other grace fail not; that the bruised reed may not be broken, nor the smoking flax quench'd, but that judgment may be brought forth unto victory.

Are we apt to be cast down because of the many defects and infirmities which attend our prayers, they shall ascend acceptably, notwithstanding perfum'd with our Saviour's much incense? He is a Master of requests that knows how to recommend our petitions and requests to God with all possible advantage.

Is it sin that dejects us? Sin in the great remains or frequent workings of it, or some heinous commissions; Christ has enough to plead for our pardon and continuance in the divine favour: And he will take care about both, as long as we are not the servants of sin.

Give not way then to dejection, O believer! Jesus Christ is an Advocate for thee, a compassionate, loving, powerful, perpetual one. Assure thyself he is such, and in the assurance rejoice, yea rejoicing triumph, as the apostle has set thee an example,

ample, where he says, who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Rom. viii. 33. 34.

6. Let us be studying through our whole lives *suitable returns* to our blessed Lord for what he does for us as our Advocate.

Love is evidently one of these returns. For in his advocacy he continues to testify a kindness and affection towards us, which is very great and admirable. May we say upon contemplating his humbling himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, leading a poor afflicted life, and at last dying an ignominious painful accurs'd death, *behold how he lov'd us!* The like may we say when we consider him as our Advocate and Intercessor at the Father's right hand; *Behold how he loves us still!* That this should be one end of his life to promote our truest eternal interest. Surely *such* love merits a reciprocal and correspondent affection. O that we might learn to carry Christ's name upon our hearts, as he does ours upon his heart!

Again, the consideration of his advocacy should teach us to persist in a course of zealous faithful service to him, and should engage us to exert our selves for the advancing

vancing his name, honour, and kingdom, in the world. Does he live *for us*, and shall we not be hereby constrain'd to live *for him?* Is he interceding and praying for us? and shall not we pray constantly and fervently for his church and people? Is he *our* Advocate, and shall not we be *his?* pleading his cause, vindicating his honour, shewing our selves valiant for his religion, truth, and ways. This is another *fit* return. Sure gratitude and ingenuity will prompt us to exert our powers for promoting his interest, who employs all his power and favour for our benefit and advantage. To conclude, Psal. lxxii. 15.

7. The consideration of Christ being our Advocate with the Father, is proper to elevate our minds and hearts from inferior things, and make us aspire heavenwards. We should *set our affections not on things on the earth*, but on *things that are above*, seeing Christ is *there* our glorify'd Redeemer, our great High-priest, our kind Advocate. The aim of all whose intercessions for us is to bring us to be with him where he is.

Let us be soaring, and more vigorously tending upwards then. Let us have our conversation indeed in heaven. And let it serve to strip death of its terrors, and reconcile us more to it, to think, that it will be a means of our translation and removal

moval to the other better world : *better*, yea *better* far upon every account ; and particularly *this*, that there we shall have the pleasure of being and conversing with our dearest Saviour ; and shall obtain a perfect everlasting fruition of his glorious and blissful presence. *Amen.*

FINIS.

The

The REDEEMER's *Concern for the Sinner's Salvation consider'd and apply'd:*

IN TWO

SERMONS

Preached at Mr. COWARD's Lecture

AT

Little St. *HELEN's*

November 29th, and *December* 13th, 1728.

By *JAMES WOOD.*

THE REDEEMER's CONCERN FOR THE SINNER's SALVATION.

JOHN vii. 27.

In the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood, and cried, if any man thirſt let him come to me and drink.

KNOWLEDGE, in the various branches of it, is entertaining to an inquiſitive mind; that knowledge in particular does exceed in value which has the moſt direct influence upon the improvement of our natures, fitting us for the obedience, which we owe to God, and which ſtands connected by the grace of his covenant with our complete bleſſedneſs. Accordingly

SERM. I. preach'd *Nov.* 29. 1728.

ingly there must be a peculiar transcendent excellency in the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, as this has a transforming and sanctifying virtue; and had we all other knowledge in its highest elevation, we could not be savingly wise, if we neglected to acquaint ourselves with him. The whole Gospel, both under the Old Testament dispensation, and the New, is a revelation of Jesus Christ: He is the Author and subject Matter of it. It came from him who lay in the bosom of the Father before all worlds, and does eminently testify of him whom rightly to know is life eternal.

The words of my text are a moving description of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, his good-will toward men; they intimate his thorough knowledge of our wants, and his inclination as well as power to supply them. They call for the most attentive regard, as pronounced by him whose kingdom ruleth over all; and who spake as never mere man did. My thoughts were directed to them by the worthy Founder of this Lecture; whose design in its erection and settlement was to have Christ in his personal Glory and mediatorial Fulness, recommended, for the encouragement of sinners, the further establishment, and more abundant consolation of the saints. A design than which none could have been more generous; God grant that it may be answer'd with signal success.

As

As to the connection of this paſſage with the context, I would obſerve, that our Lord had lately remov'd from *Jeruſalem* into *Galilee*, to avoid the rage of the *Jews*, who had reſolv'd to kill him as a *profaner of the ſabbath*, and as guilty of blaſphemy. The caſe was *this*,

He had perfectly reſtor'd an impotent man, who had lain eight and thirty years at the pool of *Bethesda* without any viſible advantage; that all preſent might be convinc'd of the miracle, he order'd him to take up his bed and walk: This was done on the ſabbath day. The fame of this miracle muſt be ſunk, and the Author of it deſtroy'd, under the ſpecious pretext of zeal for the ſabbath. The charge of *blaſphemy* was bottom'd upon his having ſaid that God was his Father; thus making himſelf, in their apprehenſion, equal with God. To eſcape this intended violence our Lord withdrew out of the province of *Judea* into *Galilee*. While here he fed five thouſand perſons with five loaves and two fiſhes: And the imperfect account we have of his doctrine during this retirement, if of ſuch advantage to us at this diſtance, beſpeaks their privilege to have been great indeed who heard theſe ſermons at length, from the mouth of the chief Prophet of the church. The feaſt of tabernacles did now draw nigh. This feſtival was one of the three ſet times in which all the males

in *Iſrael* were to appear before God. This put his friends upon ſoliciting our Lord that he would quit his preſent obſcure kind of life, and go up to *Jeruſalem*. He encourag'd their early attendance on this feaſt, but excus'd his own; in that moral duty was to take place of poſitive: The preſerving his life therefore for the preſent, which would have been thus endanger'd, was what better became him, than to make one of the firſt upon that occaſion. However about the middle of the feaſt, the hunt after him being now pretty well over, he appear'd in *Jeruſalem*, and in the temple. Intrepid amidſt his murderers his lips diſtill'd as the dew and diffuſed the ſweet ſavour of his knowledge. His word made different impreſſions upon his auditory. Some believ'd, in others ſurprize and wonder were the only effects wrought. Others again were more irritated and malignant, as they ſaw the ſucceſs of his miniſtry; inſomuch that the deſign of cutting him off was reviv'd with freſh zeal, tho' its execution was overrul'd a little longer by him in whoſe hands are our breath, and all our ways; for his hour was not yet come.

The text may well enough come in here, as a continuation of the foregoing hiſtory. *In the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, if any man thirſt let him come to me and drink.*

The

The feaſt of tabernacles was the ſame with that which is call'd the feaſt of ingathering which is in the end of the year, when they had gather'd in their labours out of the field. During this ſolemnity the people dwelt in tents, or booths made of green boughs which ſtood under a covert; hence the feſtival had its name. This was deſign'd to be a memorial to them of their forty years pilgrimage thro' the wilderneſs from *Egypt* to *Canaan*. The eighth day of the feaſt was by divine appointment an holy convocation, a ſolemn aſſembly; an offering made by fire was to be preſented unto the Lord, all ſervile work ſtrictly prohibited, and thoſe who for the ſeven preceding days had dwelt in their tents, were now to attend in perſon upon the work of the ſanctuary, or temple. On this high day, which as it brought all the people together, ſo it was to diſmiſs them to their reſpective homes, our Lord recommended himſelf to them, as the end of all their ceremonies and typical worſhip; one equal to the wants and hopes of ſinful creatures, and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all who ſhould come unto God by him.

Compare Lev. xxiii. 34. 35. 36. *with* Exod. xxiii. 16.

It is ſaid to have been the cuſtom at this feaſt to offer up water to God, to denote the bleſſing of rain, which they did then pray for againſt the approaching ſeed time; as at the Paſſover they offer'd an omer, to obtain God's bleſſing on their harveſt; and at Pentecoſt their firſt fruits, to ſecure this bleſſing

on the fruit of their trees. They drew this water out of *Siloam*, brought it into the temple with the ſound of a trumpet; while they were offering, uſing theſe words, With joy ſhall ye draw water out of the wells of ſalvation *. Poſſibly our Lord might have had an eye to this favourite uſage, when he is ſaid to ſtand and cry, or proclaim with a loud voice †; and taken occaſion from their thus drawing water out of *Siloam*, to exhort the people to fetch from him the fountain of living water, that abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteouſneſs, which he was ready to beſtow, and without which they muſt periſh in their ſins.

In the further proſecution of this paſſage I ſhall enlarge upon the following heads.

I. Chriſt makes an offer of himſelf in his full character as a Saviour, under the metaphor of *water*. When he invites us to *drink*, it is the ſame as if he had call'd upon us to receive him, and his ſalvation.

II. This offer is *general*, to *Jew* and *Gentile*, and puts no difference between great and little ſinners.

III. Here is an intimation of our liableneſs to miſtake in ſoul matters; to build upon an unſafe foundation, and take up

* Vid. *Ham.* in loc. † Εἰςήκει ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔκρα-

ſhort of Chriſt. *q. d.* I am the fountain ſet open, all ſhort of *me* will prove waters that fail.

IV. The perſons are characteriſed by the prevailing temper of their minds toward Chriſt, who do rightly come to him, and ſhall partake of his ſalvation. They are *athirſt* for Chriſt: Nothing but Chriſt, his righteouſneſs, his grace, his heaven can content them.

I obſerve,

V. That it is a matter which the Redeemer has at *heart*, to guide poor ſinners into the way of duty, and into the way everlaſting. He ſtood and *cried*, if any man thirſt let him come to me and drink.

I. Here is an offer which Chriſt is pleas'd to make of himſelf in his full character as a Saviour, *under* the metaphor of *water*. His inviting us to drink, is the ſame with his tendring himſelf, and his ſalvation in all the parts of it to our acceptance.

The purpoſe of our recovery being formed in the divine mind, *He* was choſen to be the Reſtorer of the apoſtacy; and conſenting to the propoſal (for the elect were beloved by him for the Father's ſake) our help was laid upon him. In the nature which fell, he was to finiſh tranſgreſſion, put an end to ſin, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in an everlaſting righteouſneſs;

to magnify the law, ſecure the glory of the divine perfections, providing particularly that God might appear *Juſt* in juſtifying ſuch as ſhould believe in Jeſus. As the Redeemer was *God*, it was not poſſible that he ſhould be indifferent about the rights of the Deity: Neither could he as *man* be without the tendereſt pity and compaſſion to the diſtreſs'd miſerable human nature. The merit ariſing from the voluntary obedience and ſufferings of ſuch a perſon, thus myſteriouſly conſtituted, muſt have been adequate to all the demands of the broken law; to our exigencies and wretchedneſs in our fallen condition, ſufficient to deliver us from hell; to purchaſe glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life for us; with all the grace neceſſary to diſpoſe and prepare us for the heavenly world, and ſtate. The ſcripture gives us a magnificent deſcription of Chriſt's mediatorial or relative fulneſs, as we are complete in him, and ſalvation in no other: The whole is accounted for, when the perſon of whom theſe things are affirm'd, is mention'd as the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man; as the brightneſs of the Father's glory, as well as made like to us in all things, ſin only excepted. The Old Teſtament ſaints had the benefit of his obedience and ſatisfaction, tho' God was not as yet manifeſted in the fleſh; (there is but one way for lapſed creatures to juſtification and life) he had covenanted at ſuch a certain

ſeaſon

ſeaſon to pay the full price of his people's redemption; and this covenant had credit with the Father: accordingly we read, that when the fulneſs of time was come, God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, and made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, to diſcharge the debt we had contracted, and procure at the expence of his precious blood an eternal inheritance for the peculiar people.

Gal. iv. 4. ὅτ. τὸ πλήρωμα τ̃ χρόνε.

This Lord from heaven is the ſpeaker in the text; how wonderful the condeſcenſion? how friendly the addreſs? one moſt dear to the Father, and ſtanding under theſe engagements for his people's ſalvation, freely offers himſelf to be to us, and do for us, whatever may render our felicity compleat. He who is light to them that ſit in darkneſs, wiſdom to the ſimple, reſt to the weary, ſtrength to the feeble, and them who have no might; righteouſneſs to the guilty, ſanctification to the unholy, peace to the ſorrowful, the reſurrection and life to them who ſleep in him; and redemption in its moſt exalted ſenſe, that their glorification in body and ſoul might be full and everlaſting. Thus ſufficient is he to ſupply all our wants.

The following particulars are comprehended in this invitation. *q. d.* I have power upon earth *to forgive ſin:* where it has abounded, my pardoning mercy ſhall much more abound. My people's *ſanctification* is both mine and my Father's will: by me

come the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. I will give unto my sheep *eternal life*; and having form'd them in this world for glory, possess them of the salvation to which they were chosen from the beginning, thro' sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

1. Christ does exhibit himself to *guilty* creatures, as one who does abundantly *pardon*. In me (says he) there is redemption, thro' my blood the forgiveness of sin. I came hither to present my self a sin-offering, who knew no sin, that you who are born in it, and have to this day multiply'd to offend, may be made the righteousness of God in me; absolved from guilt, accepted with God, no longer look'd upon as aliens and enemies under a curse and condemnation, but as friends brought nigh by the blood of my cross. The sacrifices from which you expect atonement, have no vertue but what is derived to them, as referring to me *the* Propitiation. If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that encourages and commands sinful creatures to address him for remission, you would no longer seek that in the type and shadow, which I appear in person, actually, effectually and authoritatively to dispense.

I think, that we may safely take *this* as our Saviour's meaning in part in this invitation. If so, it is no weak proof of his being

being God in the higheſt. None can forgive ſin but God only; he who is Lord of the law, and againſt whom the offence is committed: but our Redeemer did this even in his humbled eſtate, as one who had an eſſential right to ſuch an act of royalty: One founded in his identity of nature with the Father and the Spirit; the eternal and undivided ſource of all authority and power.

I ſtand (ſays our Lord) ſtretching forth my hands fill'd with *pardons* for rebel creatures; let him who would have remiſſion of ſins come to me.

2. There is yet more in this gracious offer. It is as if Chriſt had ſaid, the *ſanctification* of unholy creatures, is mine and my Father's will. I declare my ſelf ready to *cleanſe* from all filthineſs, whether of fleſh or ſpirit, ſuch as come to me.

I was therefore called *Jeſus*, becauſe I was to ſave my people from their ſins; purifying them to my ſelf as a peculiar people. If I waſh them not, they can have no part with me; for nothing that is defiled entreth my Father's kingdom. My blood cleanſeth from all ſin, and I now invite unholy creatures to make the experiment. Your numerous waſhings and purifications under *Moſes*'s law, are no farther of uſe to purge the conſcience, than as they are inſtituted figures of the purifying vertue of my blood and Spirit: henceforth let your recourſe

therefore be to me; behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, who ſhall purge out the old leaven, and make you a new lump. I will do that for you which the law cannot do; I will pardon your ſins, heal all your diſeaſes, cauſe you to be without ſpot and blemiſh; holy as my Father in heaven is holy, and perfect as he is perfect.

This branch of the ſalvation, of which Chriſt is the author, is a further evidence of his ſupreme Godhead. The reſurrection of a dead body is accounted for by our Lord, in oppoſition to the hereſy of the Sadducees, upon the foot of the *power* of God. He can do this, ſays Chriſt, who can do all things, tho' it is not poſſible, ſave to the Almighty. The Holy Ghoſt does frequently deſcribe the renovation of our natures by this metaphor; we are therefore ſaid, as regenerated, to be quickned when dead, to be riſen with Chriſt; which alluſions, if they mean any thing, do convey the idea of Almightineſs, or power ſtrictly and properly divine, in the efficient of regeneration. Need I ſay, that the work of holineſs does begin here?

Mat. xxii. 29.

Eph ii. 1. Col. ii. 13. Col. iii. 1.

Again,

Creative powers are indiſputable proofs of Godhead. To make ſomething of nothing, is ſo plainly ſuperior to a created influence, that we can ſcarce think of any thing that is more ſo; yet our converſion to God is deſcribed by this image a new *creation*; to

2 Cor. v. 17.

teach

teach us, that in order to renew the likeneſs of God, in which we were made at firſt, to adorn us with the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, *the ſame power* is required that was neceſſary to call us out of nothing into that being which we enjoy'd at firſt. Accordingly, the Jehovah claims the renovation of his people as his peculiar, both under the old teſtament and the new. I will ſprinkle clean water upon you, and you ſhall be clean; a new heart will I give you, I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them. In the new teſtament we are told, that it is God who worketh in us to will and do of his good pleaſure, that whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin, for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.

Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.

Phil. ii. 13.

1 John iii. 9.

In ſhort, when we think of the oppoſition made to this work from within, and from without; from our many ſtrong corruptions, and the confederated force of hell; what obſtructions are removed, what reſiſtance overcome; when we are converted, we muſt conclude that he only could create us anew, who at firſt made all things by the word of his power. When we reflect upon the hindrances thrown in the way from a wicked heart, and experienced devil, to retard the progreſs of ſanctification, where the work is already begun, it ſhould confirm us

in the belief of his being the great God, who is the Saviour of his body the church, and as ſuch has engag'd to ſanctify and cleanſe it; to begin and perfect this work.

Chriſt offers himſelf to juſtify the ungodly, to ſanctify the unholy; and to ſhew that he is a compleat Saviour, he does

3. Tender eternal redemption, as including the full bleſſedneſs of our intire perſons in another world.

We may ſuppoſe his addreſs to run *thus*, Ye are creatures made to live for ever; labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that which endureth to everlaſting life: this I am able and willing to give you. Me hath God the Father ſealed, of whom you ſay that he is your God. The government of both worlds is upon my ſhoulders; in mine hands are the keys of hell, and of the whole inviſible ſtate: look unto me, and be ye ſaved. I am the reſurrection and the life; will carefully keep my people's duſt, aſſuredly reſcue their bodies from the power of the grave. I have overcome death, it is therefore impoſſible that they ſhould be in hold beyond the ſeaſon fixed for the manifeſtation of the ſons of God. The crowns and thrones, the joys and glories of the heavenly world are at my diſpoſal. This perfect felicity, excellent above thought, moſt ſuitable, ſatisfying and permanent, ſhall all poſſeſs in body and ſoul as my free gift, who come unto me for it.

If

If these things are true of Christ, his Godhead shines forth in still a brighter and stronger glory. He who did at first by his resistless word raise such a stupendious structure as our bodies are out of the common clay, can recover them from the ruins of the grave: but he *only* can re-edify this earthly house of our tabernacle, who can call the things which are not, as if they were. He therefore sent this answer by *John*'s disciples, when they came to enquire concerning him, go and shew *John* the things which ye see and hear, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, *the dead are raised up*, and the poor are evangelized. *q. d.* None but the God of nature can over-rule and outdo the power of nature, as ye see me do. Had all this been wrought by a merely delegated authority, it would not have proved our Lord to have been more than a prophet; he must in consequence have deceived such to whom he produced these instances, as vouchers of his being the Messiah, the Son of God, and King of *Israel*. But he has provided against an interpretation so derogatory from his absolute Godhead, when he tells us, that our vile bodies shall be changed, and fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. Here is an ascription of such power to Christ, as is sufficient to do all that ever was done, all that is possible

Mat. xi. 4, 5.

Phil. iii. 20, 21.

to

to be done; and the notion of omnipotence reaches no farther than this. This power is eſſential to the Son of God; as by it he made our bodies, and created all things, ſo by it he will hereafter raiſe the dead.

And does not his inſtating us in our intire perſons in the heavenly glory, throw a more convincing light ſtill upon this great article of the Chriſtian faith? it is the character of Jehovah, that he is the God of ſalvation, which muſt not be underſtood in any ſenſe that will exclude his influence upon the chief bleſſedneſs of his people. Now, tho' the wages of ſin is death, yet eternal life is the gift of God; of God excluſively of a creature; but not of the Father excluſively of the Son: he ſaves to the uttermoſt, which would not be true did he not redeem our bodies from corruption, and make us ſit down as kings and prieſts in the heavenly places.

Upon the whole, ſince he has power to forgive ſin, to quicken and renew dead ſouls, and raiſe the bodies which ſeemed to be loſt in the duſt of death; ſince he can and will receive his people to himſelf in their intire perſons; and as the proprietor of the inheritance give them heaven it ſelf; ſince he does that for them, and gives that to them, which none but God can do and give, the concluſion is eaſy, *viz.* that he, who condeſcends to make this offer to us, is God over all bleſſed for ever.

The

The next thing I obſerved in the words was this.

II. That the offer is *general*, putting no difference between the greateſt and the leaſt of ſinners. If *any man* thirſt, let him come to me and drink. The old teſtament miniſters had their orders limited to the *Jews*; and for ſome time Chriſt reſtrained the commiſſion which he gave his diſciples, to this choſen generation. In my text the call is given to them, to all of them without exception, who would hear Chriſt's voice: *q. d.* tho' your iniquities have exceeded, do not conclude that your wound is incurable; there is balm in *Gilead*, and a phyſician there. I can make the crimes which have been as ſcarlet, like wooll; and thoſe which have been as crimſon, white as ſnow. No ſin is irremiſſible, where there is a will to come to me for pardon. Chriſt's praying for his murderers, when they had actually nailed him to his croſs, and his appointing the firſt overtures of forgiveneſs to be made to them, are a confirmation of this doctrine, if not exegetical of it. The *Jews* were at preſent, I ſay, God's peculiar people, the addreſs is made immediately to them for this reaſon; but diveſt the caſe of this particular circumſtance, ſuppoſe them cut off for their incurable unbelief, and the Gentiles graffed upon that ſtock (which a ſmall anticipation of their hiſtory will anſwer) then the

the invitation extends to all ſinners of whatever tribe, nation, kindred, or language, that ſhould hear the joyful ſound; and will juſtify me in ſaying to the oldeſt offender in this aſſembly, be of good cheer, he calleth *thee*. *Paul* was a famous inſtance of the riches of Chriſt's pardoning mercy, the freeneſs and fulneſs of it to the chief of ſinners in this more extended ſenſe; he went near to the unpardonable ſin, in the commoneſt notion of it; and I cannot ſee there would have been any proof of his not having thus ſinned unto death, if he could not have pleaded ignorance in his moſt brutiſh outrages. What we read in his remarkable caſe, was written for our inſtruction, that we thro' patience and comfort of the ſcriptures might have hope: He tells us ſo, when he ſaid, for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long ſufferings for a pattern to them who ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting. See in me, as if he had ſaid, that Chriſt is no reſpecter of perſons, that he ſcatters his *pardons* alike to Jew and Gentile, among the circumciſion and the uncircumciſed; that no circumſtances by which ſin is aggravated and render'd more heinous, ſhould diſcourage their applications to him, who can as eaſily forgive ten thouſand talents as a few pence.

1 Tim. i. 16.

Again, the tender of grace to *renew* and *ſanctify*, is free and large, as the offer which Chriſt

Chriſt makes of pardon. Tho' we have ſat ſtill, ſo that our wounds are corrupted and ſtink becauſe of our fooliſhneſs, and we are altogether as an unclean thing, this caſe is not excepted in any of the kind propoſals he makes in his Goſpel, who came not to call the righteous, but diſeaſed, defiled, periſhing ſinners. Are not all the difficulties which an unbelieving heart would ſuggeſt from ſuch a poſture of our caſe, wiſely provided againſt in the text? here is a fountain ſet open, which flows with the water of life, that has vertue in it ſuited to every article of our infelicity and diſtreſs, as fallen creatures: and if any man will come he ſhall be welcome; nay, all are invited, commanded to waſh in it and be clean. As Chriſt is plenteous in redemption, ſo he has an abundance of *Grace*, both which ſhall be unto and upon all without difference, who come unto him for them. Theſe are glad tidings of good things, the Lord help every one of us to lay them to our hearts.

Once more, the offer of eternal *glory* as ſoul and body are the ſubjects of it, has as large a compaſs; and as all ſhall have pardon and grace, ſo ſhall they have *heaven* who come unto Chriſt for it. Life and immortality are brought to light by the Goſpel. Here they are not only diſclos'd to our view, but preſented to our choice. Chriſt came to ſeek and to *ſave* that which was loſt; to open a new and living way into the

holieſt of all, that we might have life, have it abundantly, have it complete, and in its higheſt perfection.

I ſhall diſmiſs this head, when I have made theſe two remarks.

Our Lord did well know, that but few were choſen, tho' many were call'd; and that ſuch only would believe who were ordain'd to eternal life: Yet his invitations were general, and none excluded by him who did not ſhut out themſelves. The apoſtles ſet out upon the ſame principles, yet had they no cramp upon their ſpirits when preaching the Goſpel to every creature. They left ſecret things to God; had no diſcriminating marks of elect or reprobate to guide them in the exerciſe of their miniſtry: They called all men every where to repent and believe, that they might be ſav'd, perſuaded that he whoſe fan is in his hand would purge his floor, ſeparate the tares from the wheat, the bad from the good fiſh gather'd in the net. It is certain that the Goſpel is to be preach'd to all without diſtinction; it is as certain that we warrantably promiſe the full bleſſedneſs contain'd in God's covenant to every penitent believing ſinner; yet nothing is more ſure than that many to whom theſe gracious propoſals are made will not repent, nor believe, becauſe they are not of Chriſt's fold, as he himſelf has told us.

I re-

I remark farther, That it is falſe reaſoning to conclude the ability of a fallen creature for the duty which God requires of him, from this or the other thing's being inſiſted on as a duty: The divine precepts are deſign'd to ſhew us what we ſhould be or do, but are not the meaſure of our ſtrength for performance. They do rather remind us of what God has ſtill a right to demand, than point out any preſent ſufficient power, in the apoſtate and univerſally corrupted creature. The

3d. Thing I obſerv'd in the words was *this*, here is an intimation of our liableneſs to miſtake in ſoul-matters; to build upon an unſafe foundation, and take up for happineſs ſhort of Chriſt. He thoroughly knew what there was in man; the natural pride and vanity of his heart; his confidence in the fleſh; his blindneſs and ignorance as to the only remedy; and the falſe reſts he was inclin'd to ſubſtitute in the Saviour's room. It was not without reaſon that he ſo particularly directed ſinners in the text to come *to him.* The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* diſallow'd the ſtone which God has made the head of the corner. *Moſes* and *Abraham* were drawn in by theſe builders to be parties againſt Chriſt. They gloried in being *Moſes*'s diſciples, built lofty hopes upon *Abraham*'s being their Father, and work'd up theſe thoughts to a contemptuous rejection of the Lord of glory. Nay, is not this re-

corded as a general failing, that men thro' ignorance of God's righteouſneſs, went about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and refus'd to ſubmit to the *righteouſneſs of God? i. e.* to the righteouſneſs provided by God, approv'd by him, and wrought out by the great God our Saviour. This falſe way of thinking was not peculiar to the *Jews;* no, the leaven has ſpread far and wide. Such is the natural prejudice againſt the Goſpel method of ſalvation with which ſin has poiſoned human nature, that until the Almighty Grace of God does overcome the diſaffection, we ſhall catch any where for help, rather than lay hold upon the hope which God has ſet before us.

Rom x. 3.

It is to be fear'd that there are ſome in our aſſemblies, who have got free from convictions, and argued themſelves into a falſe peace, as they are the offſpring of men eminently gracious; ſuch with whom God's ſecret has been, and to whom he has ſhewn his covenant; ſome who truſt to the efficacy of their multiply'd prayers for them: And when ſuch are kept from every inſtance of groſſer wickedneſs, and do make a plauſible profeſſion, the mind comes by degrees to ſettle in the deluſion. Some are weak enough to encourage themſelves againſt the fear of death, upon their being born within the pale of the church; and their having God's name named upon them in baptiſm; tho' he with whom are the iſſues from death

death has moſt peremptorily declared that except a man *be born again* he ſhall not ſee the kingdom of heaven. It is granted that the God of their fathers is a good God, plenteous in mercy, but he is alſo a juſt and jealous God; therefore they may be in heaven, and yet you may go to hell; a great gulph be fixed between you. The grace of God is not like a patrimony, which deſcends from father to ſon; he may take one of a family, and two of a tribe, and bring them to *Zion*, while the reſt, who fancied themſelves to be children of the kingdom ſhall, be ſhut out. This is certain, that none ſhall enjoy the inheritance of his children but ſuch as walk in the ſteps of the faith of our father *Abraham*. 'Tis an happineſs to be the iſſue of believing parents, there is in this a privilege, but it is very far from ſecuring our ſalvation. In the articles of acceptance with God, and eternal life, he who has faith, has it to *himſelf*. To profeſs religion is a reaſonable ſervice, but there muſt be more to make us Chriſtians. It is a grand miſtake to triumph upon ſuch a bottom as if we had made ſure of the one thing needful: Yet under theſe ſpiders webs, broken by the winds paſſing over them, do a number of ſouls hope for ſhelter. No man ever found mercy with God out of Chriſt, nor ever will. All our ſprings are in him; and whoſoever ſhall finally refuſe to come unto *him* for life, ſhall periſh without cloak for his ſin.

What remains as to the doctrinal part of this ſubject, will be purſu'd in the next diſcourſe. Let me conclude at preſent with a brief practical *Application.*

1*ſt.* The offer which Chriſt makes of himſelf as a Saviour, diſcovers his Grace in a moſt beautiful and attractive light. What can the united, fervent, perfect adorations of ſeraphs add to him in whom the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells? What the ſpotleſs, unmix'd, unwearied obedience of the whole heavenly hoſt? He does not court our return becauſe he has need of our ſervice, but becauſe he wiſhes our happineſs; which cannot be ſecur'd while we are in an eſtate of diſtance and ſeparation from him. Is it God manifeſted in fleſh who entreats the commencement of a moſt intimate friendſhip between you? That he might in a way worthy of himſelf multiply upon you the beſt of bleſſings? Sure you muſt have a blind mind, and a very hard heart, ſinner, if you ſee not his condeſcention, and are under no conſtraints from ſuch ſurprizing amazing love.

2*dly.* His offers being made to ſinners in *general,* without objecting to the number or aggravations of their offences, does eſpecially commend the Redeemer's love. Thus it is evident that his thoughts and ways are not like ours, that he is rich in mercy, that his love has unmeaſurable incomprehenſible heights, and, depths, lengths

lengths and breadths; and no ſaying is ſo worthy of acceptation as *this* of Chriſt Jeſus's coming into the world to ſave ſinners, even the *chief* of them. This news ſhould to guilty creatures be as life from the dead; inſpire their hopes, excite their repentance, encourage their faith; it will certainly enflame their guilt, and add to their miſery to remain unaffected by this marvelous grace which has appear'd to them: For this is the condemnation that light is come into the world (that it has been favour'd with clear diſcoveries, and repeated offers of ſuch a Saviour) and yet men love darkneſs rather than light.

3dly. Are we in ſo much danger of taking up for happineſs ſhort of Chriſt? Let this put us all upon a ſerious impartial examination of our ſoul's ſtate. Let *theſe* be the queſtions we are careful to reſolve; have we heard Chriſt's voice in his Goſpel, and open'd to him? Have we yielded the obedience of faith? With full conſent receiv'd him as a ſuitable and all-ſufficient portion? Living upon him by faith, and living to him by whom we live? Has the Goſpel come to us in word only, or in power, and in the Holy Ghoſt? Have we been changed into the mold and form of divine truth? Or excepting our profeſſion, and our hopes, is there little or nothing to difference us from what we were by nature? If conſcience teſtify *againſt* you, as you love your

ſouls, and dread the thought of their being loſt for ever, do not reſt ſatisfy'd till you have reaſon to conclude that you are paſſed from death to life, and are become the children of God thro' faith in Chriſt Jeſus. But if you have obey'd the heavenly viſion, have receiv'd Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and believingly committed your ſouls with all that concerns them for time and eternity to his care, be much in admiring that diſtinguiſhing grace which has ſteer'd you right, while multitudes have ſtav'd and periſh'd on thoſe rocks which you have eſcap'd. Embrace all opportunities of coming to this Saviour; of improving in your love and likeneſs to him: If your fruit be to holineſs, the end will be everlaſting life.

The End of the firſt Sermon.

The

THE REDEEMER'S CONCERN FOR THE SINNER'S SALVATION.

JOHN vii. 27.

In the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood, and cried, if any man thirſt let him come to me and drink.

I TOOK notice of the following particulars, as comprehended in theſe words, SERM. II. preach'd *Decem.* 13, 1728.

I. Chriſt makes an offer of himſelf in his full character as a Saviour, under the metaphor of *water*. When he invites us to drink it is the ſame as if he had called upon us to receive him, and his ſalvation.

II. This

II. This offer is *general*, to *Jew* and *Gentile*; and puts no difference between the greateſt and the leaſt of ſinners. If *any* man thirſt let him come to me and drink.

III. Here is an intimation of our liableneſs to *miſtake* in ſoul-matters; to build upon an unſafe foundation, and take up for happineſs ſhort of Chriſt. You muſt come to *me* (ſays our Lord) if you would be happy for both worlds: All ſhort of me will prove waters that fail.

IV. The perſons are characteriſed by the prevailing temper of their minds towards Chriſt, who do rightly come to him; they are *athirſt* for Chriſt. I obſerved,

V. That it is a matter which the Redeemer has at *heart*, to guide poor ſinners, into the way of duty, and into the way everlaſting. He *ſtood* and *cried*, if any man *thirſt* let him come to me and *drink*.

The three firſt of theſe heads have been open'd in the foregoing diſcourſe; we ſhall go on to what yet remains of this ſubject.

IV. The next point in courſe to be conſider'd is our Lord's deſcription of the prevailing turn and temper of their minds who do ſo come to him, as to ſecure this offer'd ſalvation. The time *was* when nothing was

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leſs deſirable, but *now* they are athirſt for Chriſt. This alteration, wherever it appears, is owing to the ſecret, but reſiſtleſs operations of the *Spirit*, upon ſuch who enjoy the calls of the Goſpel. *This* muſt be a fit means of regeneration and converſion, becauſe appointed to theſe ends by unerring wiſdom; yet this ſpiritual weapon is only mighty thro' God. The ſame word would not be a ſavour both of life and death did it work *phyſically;* but where the means were the ſame, the effect would be the ſame upon all ſinners. For every mind is in divine things alike dark by nature, and every will alike averſe, tho' not to ſalvation ſimply, yet to the Goſpel-way of recovering and ſaving mankind. Hence it is we are told that the Father draws all who ſavingly come to Chriſt; that they are quickened when dead; the eyes of their underſtandings enlightened; and that they are made willing in the day of his power. There is no ſalvation but where there is repentance and faith; yet where theſe graces are found in their higheſt improvement, we drink the water of life *freely*. Does not Chriſt give repentance? And you know that he is the author of our faith. They do not merit pardon, peace, or heaven, yet by theſe graces which are God's gifts, are we diſpoſed and prepared for the receipt of theſe bleſſings in a way moſt honourable to God, and in ſuch an one as doth make them to

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us bleſſings indeed. What Chriſt has purchaſed ſo dearly, he will not laviſh; none ſhall inherit his ſalvation, who know not how to value it; and heartily adore him for it. Drink is loſt, where there is no appetite for it: and till we ſee, till we feel our want of Chriſt, have ſuch a ſenſe of our need, as that nothing elſe can quiet and ſatisfy us, the way of the Lord is not prepared. It is to the weary and heavy laden that he giveth reſt; to them who know their ſoul maladies that he is a phyſician; and tho' he invites all that are athirſt to come to him and drink, yet none but hungry and thirſty ſouls ſhall taſte of his ſupper.

You ſee, that as Chriſt does diſcover his mediatory fulneſs, and make a tender of it in a figurative way; ſo the alluſion is purſued, and that diſpoſition required in us, which particularly ſuits the repreſentation he is pleaſed to make of himſelf. He is the fountain of living water, and they only ſhall drink (partake of him and his ſalvation) whom his Spirit and grace have made *a thirſt* for both.

The phraſe takes into it ſuch things as theſe. It ſuppoſes

1. Our having a lively affecting ſenſe of our preſent indigent and miſerable ſtate. He that is ſtung with extreme thirſt, is not, by all the oratory in the world, to be perſuaded out of what he feels. However advantageous his ſituation may be in all other

reſpects, he has no comfort thence to abate, much leſs to overcome his preſent uneaſineſs: he ſees himſelf wretched, while deſtitute of the immediately neceſſary ſupports of life. Thus, when the Spirit has convinc'd a man of ſin, of his guilt, filth, enmity, blindneſs, nakedneſs, poverty, which are derived to him as an inheritance from apoſtate anceſtors; has taken the veil off his eyes and heart, he is no leſs ſtruck with the ruin which hangs over him. This was the caſe with *Peter's* auditory, when God had made way for his word to conſcience: they are repreſented as in a ſort of agony about the ſtate of their ſouls, were pricked in their hearts, and ſaid unto *Peter*, and the reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what ſhall we do? It is ſcarce in the power of language Acts ii. 37. to give a ſtronger repreſentation of diſtreſs. What ſhall we do? This beſpeaks a thoro' view of their preſent unhappy condition; of its being dangerous, comfortleſs, not a moment longer to be reſted in. It is poſſible that ſuch words may be pronounced without an anſwerable reſentment of ſoul; but where they flow from an inward conviction, this cannot be the caſe: they are then the breathing of a wounded broken ſpirit, and make a faithful report of what we actually feel. Hunger and thirſt are appetites which *return* upon us; and it is not only upon God's firſt appearing to the ſinner, that he is filled with this humbling ſenſe of his

his wretchedneſs as a fallen creature: No, all his children are witneſſes to the contrary. They groan in theſe tabernacles as thoſe who are burdened, and never have their tears wholly wiped away, till they are enter'd within the veil. It was long after *Paul* had obtain'd mercy, that he bemoaned himſelf thus, O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me! and it muſt be owing to our ignorance of God's law, and our own hearts, if we do not ſee enough in us every day that we live, to hide pride from our eyes, and deſtroy all confidence in the fleſh.

Rom. vii. 24.

2. This thirſt ſuppoſes our having the higheſt eſteem of the proviſion which God has made to ſupply our wants. A man who is parched and fainting by a violent drought, will ſet a higher value upon drink, than upon all the other accommodations of life. The moſt accumulated treaſures, the vaſteſt empire, are in his preſent condition loſs and dung, if they cannot anſwer the demands of his enraged appetite. The metaphor will hold in its application. It is infinitely more eligible in a convinced ſinner's judgment, who has taſted what a bitter thing ſin is, and who has felt it preſſing him like a weight, to have pardon from God, than to poſſeſs the largeſt increaſe of corn, wine and oil. Chriſt is precious to him, ſo as nothing in this world is; the chief among ten thouſands, and altogether lovely. He is as an hiding place from the ſtorm; as the ſhadow of

of a great rock in a weary land; to the hungry and thirſty man meat indeed, and drink indeed. He ſees mercy with him, ſuited to his miſery for kind and degree, which unriddles the ſecret of the believer's meditations upon him, being ſweet. This value for the Redeemer, is not an opinion raſhly taken up, which time and experience may ſhew cauſe to alter: this is wrought into our very *natures*, as born of God. And tho' at ſome times the flax may ſeem to be ſmoking only (an accidental damp checking the flame) yet that ſpark of celeſtial fire, which was ſent down from the Father of lights, ſhall not be extinguiſhed, until judgment is brought forth to victory.

As it is not in one particular ſtage of life only, that hunger and thirſt have this effect upon mankind, as to create in them an high rating of proper refreſhment, but their ſentiments are uniform, whenever theſe appetites are provoked; ſo the regard which a regenerate perſon has for ſpiritual and divine things, keeps an even pace thro' the whole of his life, with the affecting knowledge he has of his own poverty and emptineſs. I doubt not of my now ſpeaking to ſuch whoſe conſciences are ready to teſtify, that after many years acquaintance with God, his excellent loving kindneſs is a ſpring ſupplying with freſh tranſports of pleaſure: Upon the review of it, there are who can ſay with a flowing delight, thou haſt abundantly ſatiſ-

fied us with the fatneſs of thine houſe; made us to drink of the rivers of thy pleaſures; for with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light ſhall we ſee light.

Pſ. xxxvi. 7, 8, 9.

3. This metaphor ſuppoſes ardent and vigorous deſires of the ſupply we need. As meat and drink are inhanced in their value, by the pain which is felt in the want of them; ſo it is impoſſible that we ſhould not wiſh for, and endeavour after the proviſion, without which we periſh: or that we ſhould be cold and indifferent in our deſires and attempts to ſecure it. Deny me any thing elſe in the world (will the thirſty creature ſay) but give me drink or I die. What is my birth-right, the honours or advantages of it, while I am languiſhing into my grave for lack of a drop of water to cool my tongue? drink will content me, whatever beſides I want; without it I am undone, whatever elſe I have: the alluſion will hold again, in the application of it. The ſight which a ſinner has of his own miſery, and the Redeemer's glory under the influence of the Holy Ghoſt, is not inoperative, and unaffecting, but powerfully inclines and determines him to flee for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before him. When God thoroughly convinces of ſin, it is with a deſign of redeeming from it; and always does he create deſires after that grace, which he intends more fully to communicate. I ſaid

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more fully, becauſe theſe very deſires are the fruit of grace already beſtowed upon us. Theſe are as ſtrong and vehement in the regenerate, as thoſe which fill the hungry man to his neceſſary food. Indeed there is this peculiar and diſtinguiſhing in theſe ſpiritual thirſtings, that they are not ſtilled and quieted on a ſudden, but grow more violent thro' enjoyment. A real Chriſtian never has as much of God, and Chriſt, and grace, as he deſires, untill he is got ſafe to heaven. Not that theſe ſpiritual bleſſings are in their own nature unſatisfying; but our preſent ſtate of being renders us incapable of their full revelation: ſo that we have thoſe things now in meaſure, and as we can bear them. Holy *David* was an inſtance of theſe vehement deſires which repleniſh a ſanctified heart. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God. My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God. O God, thou art my God, my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is, to ſee thy power, and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the ſanctuary. *q. d.* Lord, I have taſted that thou art good, I have ſat under thy ſhadow with delight, thy fruit has been ſweet to my taſte; but the diſcoveries of thy love to the ſoul, create no ſatiety: give me my fill of love. O for more of the light of thy countenance, of the kiſſes of thy mouth, thy

Pſ. xlii. 1, 2.

Pſ. lxiii. 2 b initio.

love ſhed abroad in my heart! never did thirſty creature more eagerly purſue the cool refreſhing ſtream, than I do deſire thy grace and favour; when wilt thou come unto me, to ſatisfy my longing ſoul? thou who art the health of my countenance, and my God.

You may obſerve upon the whole, that ſpiritual thirſt, as I have now explained it, comprehends a ſound *repentance*, and that *faith* which is of the operation of God; thus the text harmonizes with the general drift and deſign of the goſpel, which calls all men every where to repent and believe, as ever they would eſcape wrath to come, and lay hold upon eternal life. Theſe graces, when of the ſaving kind, lay the ſinner in the duſt before God as miſerable, and yet unworthy of mercy; open the intellectual eye, to diſcern the Redeemer's ſuitable fulneſs; influence the will to approve and deſire him; to do both with that reſolution and fulneſs of conſent, that nothing is or can be admitted in lieu of this one thing needful, this good part which being once ours, ſhall never be taken from us. The wiſdom and goodneſs of God are very conſpicuous in this way of methodizing and ſettling the applicatory work of the Spirit; whoſe office is not only to ſhew us of Chriſt's, but poſſeſs us of the many invaluable benefits which were procured by his extreme, yet moſt voluntary humiliation.

But I proceed to the next obſervation.

5. That

5. That the Redeemer has it at *heart* to lead ſinners into the path of duty, and the way everlaſting. Jeſus *ſtood and cried*, if any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink. *q. d.* You muſt ſee your need of me, before I can help you; you muſt thirſt before you will reliſh drink; but no ſooner are you prepared for mercy, than you ſhall find me inclined to beſtow it. While the full ſhall be ſent empty away, you ſhall drink, and drink abundantly, my beloved. Many a ſermon did our Lord deliver *ſitting*, and this was the uſual mode of expreſſion, by which the account of them was introduced, that being ſat, he opened his mouth, and ſaid; or, he taught them, ſaying: upon this ſolemn occaſion, he *ſtood*; probably to engage and fix the attention of this large auditory the better: and his *crying* ſeems to expreſs the fervour and holy vehemence of his mind, who well knew the importance of the meſſage he was to deliver, and the worth of thoſe ſouls to whom he was about to make a tender of the manifold grace of God.

The elegant prophetic deſcription which *Solomon* gives of the Meſſiah's concern to make the *duty* of ſinners plain to them, is little ſhort of what the apoſtle calls travailing in birth; when nature has her ſtrongeſt throws. Wiſdom crieth without, ſhe uttereth her voice in the ſtreets, ſhe crieth in the chief place of concourſe, in the open-

ing of the gates; in the city she uttereth her voice, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and ye scorners delight in your scorning, and fools hate knowledge: turn ye at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. As if this single advertisement of the Redeemer's inclination, did not enough declare how earnestly he was set upon this design, it is repeated; and here the stile is more of a piece with that which lies before us in the text. Does not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice, she standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths; she crieth at the gates, at the entring of the city, and the coming in at the doors? unto you, O men, I call, my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be of an understanding heart! Hear, for I will speak of excellent things, all my words are plain to him that understandeth right, to them that find knowledge, receive my *instruction.* Christ is described in these places by wisdom and understanding, by the figure *Prosopopœia:* the things predicated of wisdom, do agree to Christ; and what cause to scruple the application, when among his new testament names, this is one, that he is Christ the wisdom of God? His weeping over *Jerusalem,* and the pathetick speech he pronounced upon her incurable obstinacy, bespeaks his

Prov. i. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Prov. viii. *ad ver.* 11.

his having no pleasure in their death that die. Nay more, even his concern, that the doctrines of salvation, and the rational evidence by which they are recommended, did not gain upon their prejudicate minds. I acknowledge, that their temporal destruction, in a civil and religious capacity, was now proclaim'd as at the door; that the forfeiture of their privileges as a church and nation, should be improved so, as to cause their very name to cease, who had so long been God's favourite people: but more than this, worse, much worse, had their unbelief brought upon them, when it fetch'd tears from the Redeemer's eyes; and he declared, without any softnings, that the things which belong'd to their peace were hid from their eyes. It was a moving sight to behold human nature so greatly degenerated from its original rectitude, as that there should be no room left to entertain a Saviour, whose name is as ointment poured forth; to see all the avenues of the heart fortify'd against the King of glory; men resolutely bent upon their own ruin, in defiance of the most faithful and affectionate warnings; rejecting the counsel of God against themselves: This excited the Redeemer's pity, melted his tender heart: he could not look on such awful confusion brought by sin, upon this curious part of the divine workmanship, without weeping. Such passages as *these* are recorded on purpose to encourage

Compare Mat. xiii. 17. *with* Luke xix. 41, 42.

our belief of the Redeemer's ardent deſire of his people's *happineſs*; behold I ſtand at the door and knock, if any man will hear my voice, and open *to me*, I will come unto him, and ſup with him, and he ſhall ſup with me. Come to me all ye who labour, and are heavy laden, I will give you reſt. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſouls. My yoke is eaſy, my burden is light. Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Let him that is athirſt come, and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Theſe ſcriptures (I ſay) are as ſo many ſtately monuments, upon which *theſe* truths are inſcribed, for the encouragement of all ſucceeding ages, *viz.* The Redeemer's ardent deſire of our being brought to knowledge of our duty; and ſo, to true happineſs: for theſe hang together in a beautiful order.

Do theſe points need further illuſtration? Think of the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, that Glorifier of Chriſt, whom the Father has ſent in his name. Engage your thoughts upon the nature of his office or employment, in the œconomy of our redemption. Remember how he moves upon the waters of the ſanctuary; ſtrives with ſinners under the goſpel, tho' they reſiſt and grieve him.

him. That he is a Spirit of light, life, of love, and holineſs; and where his motions are cheriſhed, is an earneſt of complete ſalvation. Let not this be overlooked, that the ſurprizing things which he does in and upon his people, he does them as the Spirit of Chriſt, purchaſed and ſent for this very end. I cannot but think that theſe particulars, thus connected, bid fair towards our ſettlement in the preſent truths. I ſhall only add, that the erecting of a goſpel miniſtry, the ſucceſs whereof is ſecured by the promiſe of Chriſt's ſpiritual preſence, is an argument that will bear mentioning upon this head. We are embaſſadors for Chriſt, (ſays *Paul*) as tho' God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, be you reconciled unto God. *q. d.* What Chriſt did in perſon, being preſent with his people, being abſent, he now does by proxy. He urg'd you to acquaint yourſelves with God, and be at peace, that good might come to you; diſcover'd himſelf to be your peace: aſſuring you, that rightly to know him, was life eternal. He has left our inſtructions with us, that the ſame deſign might go on: that we might eſpouſe you unto this one huſband. We are to carry forward the treaty which he began; and ſo much is his heart ſet upon it, that unto the end of the world, there ſhall be ſuch whoſe proper office and buſineſs it is to carry his friendly meſſage to you; and let you know from time to time,

what you must do to be saved. The apostolical office strictly consider'd, was extraordinary; and what was in it extraordinary ceased, when the end of its institution was attained: there are therefore no rules left in scripture for propagating a succession of these ministers, as there are for the continuation of pastors and teachers in the Christian church. Excepting some few things *peculiar* to the apostleship; the work of an apostle was the same with ours. This however is common to both, to preach Christ, and administer such other gospel ordinances, which, as divinely appointed, are made effectual to the great purposes of the conviction, conversion, sanctification and salvation of the elect. It is true of both, they are embassadors for Christ, to recommend his person, pursue his interests, and according to the orders given, to win over the subjects of this great prince from their unnatural rebellion, to a lasting and honourable peace.

Now, if Christ be not intent upon our instruction and happiness, why such frequent declarations of this on his part? whence his constantly managing in a way so like it? to what purpose was all this cost? why so great a price given for the holy Spirit? his mission circumstanced with such peculiar solemnity? whence a set of men as long as this world shall last, to publish reports which want a sufficient foundation? These are things which bear hard upon God's wisdom, his goodness and

and truth: yet there is room for such reflections, if the doctrine be not just, which I have been endeavouring to establish.

Let us now go on to the practical application of what has been said.

1. Do all who come aright to Christ, experience the spiritual thirst which I have described? then

1. This accounts for the believer's love to an unseen Jesus. It is a paradox to the world, that any, especially persons of distinguished taste, surrounded with present sensible objects, adapted to make this life desirable, and possessing a large portion of these good things, should transfer their supream affection to what is distant and invisible, and live upon earth like men of another country. It is not enough lamented, that this seemingly odd complexion of mind, is not more generally discoverable in the professing world. But after all, did they who wonder at the Christian's Spirit, know how he was prepared and formed for a conduct so different from the common course of mankind, the surprize would cease. It is true of many, that God's wrath has scorch'd them like the summer's heat; his arrows have been stuck in their flesh, the venom of which has been ready to drink up their spirits: they have tried what this world could do, towards healing a wounded conscience, and found every creature in the same cry, your help is not in me; arise and get ye hence, for this

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is not your reſt; they have been toſſed and troubled, and not comforted; ſailed many a night and day without ſun, moon, or ſtar appearing to allay their fears, or *direct* their courſe: at length has the Sun of righteouſneſs aroſe with healing under his wings. All God's people have been ſo far enlightned, as to the eſtate of ſin and miſery they are in by nature, ſo convinced of the abſolute unfitneſs of all created things, to eaſe them under their ſoul diſtreſſes, and of the Redeemer's inclination and power to ſuccour and ſave them, as to give him their hearts. The Prince that pardoned men under condemnation, who lived many days in dread of approaching death, may reaſonably expect, that they will ſhew a becoming reſentment of his goodneſs. And this will be the effect of ſuch favour upon an ingenuous mind. Men who are really healed of *ſoul* maladies, will heartily love their phyſician; bondsmen and captives, the generous friend who was at the expence of their redemption; creatures poor to a proverb, him who had enriched them; enriched them with preſent comfort, and a right to the moſt noble inheritance. Is it marvellous that ſuch inſtances of benevolence attract and engage the eſteem of thinking creatures, of thoſe who cannot forget the wormwood and the gall? eſpecially when Chriſt gives to all thoſe on whom he confers theſe marks of his love, an heart to love him; creating them

them anew to all those good works, in which from eternity they were ordain'd to walk? Little do they think, to whom religion in its purity, and power, is unaccountable, what these men have had already from heaven; and how much more they *expect*, whose hearts and conversations are there.

2. This doctrine intimates a remarkable difference between *Christians* in God's account, and those who bear the character by this world's courtesy. We may be sufficiently charitable, without believing that all who pass for saints have felt this *heart-work*, which our Lord makes not expedient only but necessary to our being actually interested in his redemption. Whence that fearlessness of *heart*-sins in many nominal *Christians*, if they have been acquainted with the Spirit's convincing influence? that formality in religion? that estrangement from the heavenly world? that pride? those inordinate passions? that covetousness? that conformity in thinking and acting to the corruptest standard, if they have been awakened, quickened, have seen the law's purity, sin's sinfulness, and had destruction from the Lord made a terror to them? It is too certain that sin may remain in a person converted to God; that it may break out into what are call'd the spots of God's children; but there is *this* to distinguish such, that they do not fall so often as others; neither is there that consent of will which greatens the

the malignity of other men's ſins, and makes them properly wicked departures from the living God. Chriſt dwells in the believer's heart by faith, his is a growing knowledge of him, love to him, delight in him; ſin is watch'd, pray'd, and ſtrove againſt, not merely as damning, but as defiling. As he knows what ſin coſt Chriſt, ſo he remembers what it coſt him; what pain and ſorrow, when the candle of the Lord was firſt lighted up in conſcience. He abides in Chriſt, and Chriſt in him. What he does in religion proceeds from a principle of ſpiritual divine life; therefore his tendencies towards God are uniform and laſting. As great is the difference between a nominal *Chriſtian* and this new creature, as between a ſhadow and ſubſtance, a picture and life, a branch in Chriſt by mere contact or adheſion, and one that is grafted into him, and ſo partakes of the fatneſs of this olive-tree. One has the form of godlineſs, the other has experienced its vital transforming power. One ſits before God as his people ſit, the other being united to Chriſt in *his* effectual calling, has refreſhing communion with him. Such is the mixture in the church at preſent; but the diſcriminating day approaches, which will manifeſt every man's works: Shew who they were that believed to the ſalvation of the ſoul, and who that would not come to Chriſt, that they might have life.

3. This

3. This doctrine is of ſpecial uſe to direct us in examining our ſpiritual ſtate. Are thoſe only ſo come to Chriſt, as to be ſecured of the benefits of his redemption whoſe ſouls have thirſted for him? Let us ſit in judgment upon our own caſe, leſt the foundation upon which we build our hopes ſhould not be equal to the ſtreſs we lay upon it. You have heard that many do deceive themſelves, how naturally does this thought riſe up in every mind, what if *I* ſhould be one of that number, and cheat myſelf out of *my* ſoul? prove a caſt away after I have been ſainted by the world, and finiſh'd in my mind ſo many pleaſing draughts of the ſaints inheritance, as a proviſion made for me? Chriſt will be a Saviour to ſuch alone who come to him in the way which he has preſcribed; have I enter'd by the door into the ſheepfold, or climbed up ſome other way, as thieves and robbers do? What do I know experimentally of that thirſt, of which all can give ſome account, whom he has ſet apart for himſelf; I was born blind, do I now ſee? I was fooliſh, diſobedient, ſerving diverſe luſts and pleaſures, am I ſtill ſold under ſin? I roll'd it as a ſweet morſel, is it diſtaſtful, as ever it was ſweet to me? Have my convictions enlarg'd themſelves to the ſinfulneſs of my nature? Have I been truly humbled for the guilt and corruption propagated to me with my being? Have the curſe and condemna-

tion of the law made my flesh tremble because of God? so animated my fears that I was like the troubled sea, which cannot rest? nothing in this world able to calm the tempest which raged in my breast? to rebuke my sorrows, or give me peace? Can I remember when pardon was as dear a thing to me as life? When I would willingly have been stripp'd of every outward comfort, for one smile of God's face! When Christ was the most beautiful and engaging object that ever did present itself to my mind? One to be preferr'd with his reproaches, and his cross, to thousands of gold and silver? Have I, instead of consulting with flesh and blood, deferring the further pursuit of my convictions to a more convenient season, encouraged them with the most faithful diligence, 'till I lodg'd my soul in his hands, who accepts according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not, where there is a willing mind? Is God my witness that this report is true? That I have been, and felt, and done, what I now declare concerning my self? Happy soul who can come this length! Your beloved is yours, and you are his; and if Christ be yours all things are yours. His providence shall protect and supply you; his unerring counsel guide you; his spirit of grace and consolation sanctify, stablish, settle, and comfort you: The same heaven receive you into which Christ is enter'd. *Here* the

caſe is always the ſame with every converted perſon, he has a thirſt which all things in this world cannot quench; ſuch a ſight of ſin, and of the Saviour which God has appointed, that one is moſt hateful, and the other moſt lovely: Which is ſufficient for your direction when you would be inform'd of your ſpiritual ſtate.

But ſuppoſe that conſcience ſhould bring in a different verdict; after a thorough ſearch into the caſe, declare you to be wholly unacquainted with ſuch a work as I have deſcrib'd (and this is very poſſible) think what a melancholy face this will put upon your affairs, however plauſible your profeſſion, or ſprightly your hopes. Never to this day have you come to Chriſt; you have received his grace in vain: And can you recollect under whoſe conduct you are, while tho' in words you acknowledge Chriſt, yet in works you deny him and your hearts remain firm, or your hearts ſtrong? The God of this world has blinded you, and leads you captive at his pleaſure. His ſervants ye are whom ye obey; and what can be a more unſeemly ſight than one of the devil's vaſſals in Chriſt's livery? As all the communicative fulneſs of Chriſt ſhall be for their ſervice who obſerve his inſtructions, and have come to him as the Goſpel directs, it is certain of you that you are without warrantable claim to his benefits: For there is no dividing between Chriſt and his purchaſe.

And

And if ſo, yours is more than a negative infelicity; for ſuch as are out of Chriſt, are under the wrath of God; and dying in this ſtate, this tremendous wrath will abide upon them for ever.

2. Is Chriſt heartily concern'd to inform your mind, and ſave your ſoul ſinner (that ſoul of whoſe peace you have been ſo prodigal, and careleſs of its welfare) and ſhall not this excite thy pity for thyſelf? And put you upon minding this ſoul after a better ſort, which is a jewel of ſuch value in the Redeemer's account? Many as the ſlights have been ſhewn to his former calls, yet he waits to be gracious; lifts up his voice, ſtretches forth his hands; does this day renew his invitation to the oldeſt ſinner, to him whoſe offences have been moſt provoking; to day while it is call'd to day, if they will not harden their hearts, but hear his voice. He exhorts and beſeeches with all long-ſuffering, that his grace may be as illuſtriouſly diſplay'd in your ſalvation, as ever it hath been in the bringing of his ſons and daughters to glory. Many prophets and righteous men have deſir'd to ſee the things which you ſee, and have not ſeen them, and to hear thoſe things which you hear, yet have not heard them. See that you refuſe not him that ſpeaketh; for if they eſcap'd not who refus'd him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh

from

from heaven. Were I able to make such way for these kind admonitions and counsels into your hearts as would let Christ into every soul that lives without God in the world, I would labour to the uttermost in such a service. But here he who plants and waters is nothing: However, let us reason together; weigh the following particulars which deserve your thoughts. Consider

1*st*. What the offer which Christ makes, does contain as to the *matter* of it. We read of the unsearchable riches of Christ, but as if all his acquisitions, when open'd in their respective glory, were not enough to captivate the mind to his obedience, he puts himself in *person* into the proposal; agreeing to convey a right to this immense treasure, unto every penitent believing soul. If a pardon were brought to a condemned criminal, there would not need much of the art of persuasion to engage his acceptance of it. A man dying of a fretting leprosy, would be easily reconcil'd to a cure. Why, as unbelievers ye are condemn'd already; are under the power of a most dangerous disease; Christ offers pardon, and healing; these are the favours which ye reject while ye walk after the course of this world. Unhappy will the case be indeed, if at last ye are thus charg'd by the Judge of quick and dead, ye *would*

not come to me that ye might have life. If ye refuſe to ponder ſuch propoſals in your hearts; and to endeavour all ye are able to be anſwerably impreſſed by them; Think,

2*dly*. What the choice is you abide by, ſinner, while the Redeemer's condeſcention and grace have not power to conſtrain you. It ought to be ſomething of ſuperior worth to what you forego for it. To have a more certain and immediate influence upon your happineſs: it ſhould at leaſt be equally valuable, and bid as fair towards your advantage and comfort. This muſt be allow'd for juſt reaſoning; it is not to be oppoſed but by the forfeiture of our underſtanding. Now, bring this point to, will it hold of the ſervice of ſatan? Of the pleaſures of ſin? Of any thing in this world, provided that you had its choiceſt ſtores in your poſſeſſion? You are hugging your chains while you make light of the glorious liberty of God's children. You are fond of poverty and diſgrace, deſpiſing the riches and honours which come from God. You are making a covenant with death, and with hell are coming to an agreement; while of the heavenly world and ſtate, you ſay, the glory is departed. O fooliſh creatures! O the amazing deceitfulneſs of ſin! Once more,

3*dly*. Con-

3dly. Consider the very great uncertainty of life; and that there are no offers of Christ on the other side the grave. Christ is now calling you as a *Saviour*, but how rashly do you assure yourself that this is not the last time in which you shall hear him speak in this strain? That if you go away from this sermon with your usual hardness, he will not before the return of such an opportunity call you as the *Governor* and *Judge* of the world to settle your accounts for eternity? and receive as an instance of his inflexible justice, the damnation you have been working out? It is not pleasant to ministers to dwell on these pungent awful truths; they would choose the brighter side; prophesy soft things to you in the name of the Lord: But they should take heed above all things that they are found *faithful.*

I shall subjoin a few *directions*, which you may find your account in observing, and conclude.

1st. Study Christ, if you would rightly come to him. There is none that understandeth (says the apostle) therefore none that seek God. And he does elsewhere attribute the sinner's alienation from the life of God, to the ignorance that is in him. By nature the understanding which is the directive faculty of the soul is darkened, and we do not desire an unknown good. Our *Compare* Rom. iii. 11, *with* Eph. iv. 18.

Lord himſelf countenances this rule of conduct in the diſcourſe with the woman of *Samaria*; if thou hadſt known the gift, and who it is that ſaith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldſt have ask'd of him, and he would have given thee living water. Diligently improve all the appointed means of acquainting yourſelf with Chriſt. You are then in the way to know, when following on to know the Lord.

John iv. 10.

2*dly*. Study *thyſelf*, ſinner. Endeavour to dwell much in thine own heart. Many a man is a bankrupt who reckons himſelf rich, becauſe a ſtranger to his books, which would give him the true ſtate of his affairs. And ſure I am that the pride and ſelf-ſufficiency which keep multitudes from Chriſt, repeated and affectionate as his invitations are, are the offspring of moſt notorious ignorance of themſelves. You cannot but conclude, if you think at all, that your nature is not now as it came out of the hands of God. He did not make you dark, ſenſual, earthly, averſe to good, and prone to ſin; and it is eaſy to infer further, that unleſs this nature be changed from what it is at preſent, your ſalvation is impoſſible. Compare what you are and do, with what you ſhould be and do; the law of God will convince you of errors innumerable, while at the ſame time it declares the wages of ſin to be death. He who feels himſelf ſick will give over

over objecting againſt the phyſician. Above all,

3dly. Cry mightily to God for his *Spirit*, to create in you thoſe hungrings and thirſtings which he has promiſed to ſatisfy. Do not ſay that you can't of yourſelf pray acceptably, and that it is as good not to pray at all as to pray amiſs, or pray in vain. Prayer is an article of natural religion, in the diſuſe of which no man living can juſtify himſelf: And how do you know that the prayer which you began under the influence of the ſpirit of bondage, may not be carried on, and concluded under the benign aid of the Spirit of adoption? Be the event what it will, duty is yours; and if God give you an heart to continue inſtant in ſupplication, it is an earneſt of mercy at the door. If he draws you ſhall run after him, he will open the heart to Chriſt and fill it with his offered promiſed grace: Give you that water, drinking of which you ſhall thirſt no more, nor ever go elſewhere to drink.

To conclude, let ſuch of us as have been enabled to fall in with the gracious offer Chriſt makes of himſelf in his Goſpel, and yield ourſelves to him as a willing people, bleſs God for his unſpeakable gift; live more conſtantly upon this Saviour, as one from whom we are to receive all our ſupplies. Let us imitate *his* example in recommending

ing this Chriſt to all on whom we have influence. This gratitude will pleaſe him: And remember that he who converts a ſinner from the error of his way ſaves a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAGE 15. l. 7. 8. read *together, for its diſtinct and united exerciſes.* p. 33. at the end of l. 10. put ? p. 43. l. 28. r. *need.* p. 60. l. 21. r. *it is ſo abſolutely.* p. 62. at the end of l. 11. put (.) and l. 13. put (,) p. 64. l. 15. put (?) l. 30. put (;) p. 65. l. 2. put (.) p. 90. l. 8. r. *of the Chriſtian.* p. 96. l. 4, 5. r. *affections.* l. 13. r. *ſo returning.* p. 99. l. 30. r. *adopted.* p. 100. l. 1. r. *meditate.* l. 19. *while.* p. 103. l. 30. r. *riſing.* p. 112. l. 27. at the end put (.) p. 127. l. 28, 29. r. *diſparaging.* p. 135. l. r. *remembrancers.* p. 148. l. 4. r. *ſpirit.* p. 160. l. 10. r. *object.* p. 166. l. 19. r. *ſhould.* p. 272. l. 20, in the margin r. *Phil.* ii. 6, 7. p. 316. l. 17. r. *offended.* p. 352. l. 12. put (,) l. 20. put (.) p. 390. l. 24. r. *viſion.* p. 393. after l. 24. infert, 1. *It was a juſt ground,* &c. p. 400. l. 6. r. *But if both.* p. 409. l. ult. r. *chuſe.* p. 412. l. 13. r. *expiatory.* l. 30. dele *the.* p. 413. l. 13. dele *, and put it line laſt after *antiquities.* 414. l. 26. r. *place,* p. 418. l. 16. r. *ſacrifices.* p. 419. l. 30. r. *have committed.* p. 422. after *avri* dele 12. p. 424. l. 15. after *inſtead* r. *of us.* and dele *Lowth on Iſa.* in the margin, and add it in the margin of the next page. p. 427. l. 33. r *expiations.* p. 432. l. 1. for *real* r. *rich.* 433. l. 1. for *them* r. *you.* p. 444. l. 10. dele *not.* p. 450. l. 21. r. *living.* p. 452. l. 31. r. *caſes.* p. 453. l. 9. r. *ſentiment.* p. 458. l. 29. r. *flow.* p. 463. l. 23. r. *defend.* p. 467. l. 18. r. *ſin.* p. 473. l. 15, dele (.) after *acceptably,* and put it after *notwithſtanding.*

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